Collective Action and Everyday Politics of Smallholder Farmers in Ugbawka:

Examining Local Realities and Struggles of Smallholder Rice Farmers

Chika Charles ANIEKWE

Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Bradford Centre for International Development (BCID)
School of Social Sciences and Humanities
University of Bradford

2015

Abstract

Name: Chika Charles ANIEKWE

Title: Collective Action and Everyday Politics of Smallholder Farmers: Examining Local Realities and Struggles of Smallholder Rice Farmers in Ugbawka

Keywords: *Collective Action, Everyday Politics, Smallholder Farmers, Institutions, Agency, Nigeria, Enugu and Ugbawka*

The research draws on an ethnographic research and explores the everyday practice of collective action in Ugbawka in Enugu State by using interviews and participant observation.

The study reveals that smallholder collective action is not best fitted into formal institutional arrangement but takes place within a complex and intricate process that involves interaction with diversity of institutions and actors. Equally, the interactions that occur amongst actors are mediated at the community level through interplay of socio-cultural and political factors. This study recognises and places emphasis on understanding of agency and the exercise of agency at the local level arguing that smallholder farmers are not robot but active individual who exercise their agency purposively or impulsively depending on conditions and the assets available at their disposition as well as their ability to navigate the intricate power dynamic inherent at local context. The thesis thus questioned the simplistic use of formal institutional collective action framework in smallholder collective action at the community level and argues that institutions are not static and do not determine outcomes but are informed by the prevailing conditions at the community level. The study emphasises the role of existing institutions and socially embedded principles in community governance and argues that actors should be the focus of analysis rather than the system in understanding smallholder collective action. The study concludes by advocating for further research that could explore the possibility of hybrid approach that accepts the advantages of both formal and informal institutional forms of smallholder collective action.

Dedication

To the Glory of God

And

To my wife Chisom Juliet Charles-Aniekwe

And

My sons Odera and Tonna Charles Aniekwe

Acknowledgements

The progress made in carrying out this research may not have been conceivable without the support of my research supervisors – Dr Behrooz Morvaridi and Dr Anna Mdee. Their assistance and constructive criticisms ensured that I continued to work and shape this thesis until the last period of my study. They persevered and supported even in the most trying period and they have consistently remained main sources of inspiration. Also, I would like to show profound appreciation to the support staff of the School of Social and International Studies especially Michele Mozley for her support and encouragement. The University of Bradford Library and its staff were valuable in ensuring that I accessed relevant literature even if it required sourcing from other University Libraries.

My special thanks go to the rice farmers of Ugbawka in Enugu State, Nigeria that allowed me unlimited access to their homes, farmers and markets without discrimination. I also wish to extend my thanks to the community members, the village council, market women, age grade who spoke to me at odd hours and who allowed me to participate in their various meetings and discussions.

This study also benefitted from research visits to relevant NGOs like Oxfam Nigeria and Ministry of Agriculture Enugu State including offices of FADAMA, CADP, ADP and SONGHAI projects. I would like to show appreciation to officials of these organisations.

The requisite financial support for this research was primarily provided by my elder brother; Mr Okechukwu Cajethan Aniekwe. Your decision to invest your limited financial resources in me is a testimony of the remarkable confidence you have in me and I will continue to look back to this incredible support all through my life. You supported me even though it was huge financial burden to your immediate and extended families. The progress and completion of this research had been threatened at various stages due to financial constraints. I therefore wish to acknowledge the support of various institutions that came to my aid during this difficult period. My thanks also go to the Alan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, the Professional Aid Council, The Leche Trust and the Churches Commission on

Overseas Students Hardship. I also wish to thank the University of Bradford for the Student Bursary Stipend.

I am eternally grateful to my family (brothers and sister) for their unflinching and comprehensive support in love, care and finances. Thanks to Chief and Lolo FMO and Juliana Aniekwe, who have made me what I am today. Chief, it is done. I also thank the following friends who remained with me throughout the journey of completing this research; Dr. Jide Okeke, Dr. Job Akuni, Dr. Maximillian Kolbe Domapielle and to other numerous friends who provided additional moral support and motivation. For all these, I am profoundly grateful. This research would have been impossible without the guidance, provision and inspiration of the almighty God.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Agricultural Development Program
CADP	Commercial Agriculture Development Program
CI	Critical Institutionalism
CR	Critical Realism
DFID	Department for International development
ENABLE	Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FCA	FADAMA Community Action
FSR	Farming Systems Research
GEMs	Growth and Employment in States
IFAD	International fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LFD	Local FADAMA Desk
M4P	Making Market Work for the poor
MI	Mainstream Institutionalism
NACB	Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank
NCRI	National Cereal Research Institute
NGPP	National Grain Production Programme
NDP	National Development Plan
NPMC	Nigerian Produce Marketing Company
NSS	National Seed Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PropCom	Promoting Pro Poor opportunities in Service and Commodity Markets
RIFAN	Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program

SEI	Songhai Enugu Initiative
SFDO	State FADAMA Development Office
SFTC	State FADAMA Technical Committee
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
WDR	World Development Report
WID	Women in Development

Table of Contents

Chapter One:

1.0 Introduction and Overview of the Thesis

1.1 Introduction

Over the past three decades, shifts in development discourse attempts to place the poor at the centre of development programmes, theories and designs. An important aspect of this shift is the rise in mainstream approaches that advances market imperatives as the panacea for poverty reduction and eradication. An offshoot of these approaches is the recognition of the importance of agriculture in the poverty discourse. In particular, these approaches recognise that smallholder agriculture through collective action could be the path to poverty reduction. The World Development Report (WDR) of 2008 titled *Agriculture for Development* brought this debate to the forefront, emphasising that smallholder agriculture is the path to poverty reduction (World Bank, 2007). The report further underscored that smallholder collective action through the use of cooperatives, farmer unions and associations was the path through which to reduce poverty. The report also highlighted that for smallholder collective action to function effectively, it was important that formal institutions, rules, roles, and rewards and sanctions were put in place. This thinking resonates with the view that economic materialism is the core motivation for collective action and that institutional design that ensures compliance would solve collective action problems (Olson, 1965, Anand, 2003, Anand, 2007)

In many developing countries, smallholding is the major source of livelihood for the majority of the people. The contribution of agriculture to national growth and rural poverty reduction depends on the productivity of smallholder farmers. This is linked to the extent to which they can:

- Access market inputs;
- Own and control assets;
- Gain access to credit and insurance;

- Balance the domineering power of the market middlemen; and
- Collectively articulate their needs and carry them forward for policy changes.

The WDR thus made a case for supporting smallholding as a viable route of getting communities out of rural poverty. The WDR suggested that the success of smallholdings could be achieved through market integration anchored on collective action through cooperatives, farmers' union, and producer organisations with the absence of the state and the moderator between the farmers and the private sector.

In most developing countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), collective action has always been an integral part of the agricultural processes and as a strategy for effective cooperation and support amongst the smallholders. The shift in smallholder collective action in most of the SSA countries is historical and follows the pattern of the development in many previously colonised countries. That is as they have moved from the colonial period to the post-colonial period and currently to the new era of market liberations. The WDR of the World Bank (2007) argues that the failing of smallholder collective action was partly due to the failure of successive approaches (colonial and independence) that placed emphasis on transferring power from local authorities and the subsequent neglect and lack of recognition of the roles of community and local cultures in the shaping of smallholder collective action functioning.

As a result of the new wave of understanding of smallholder collective action, many development agencies and ministries in developing countries and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have developed market system approaches for smallholder collective action based on the institutional design approach that focuses on the formal arrangements and eschews informality and social realities. Some of these approaches include the:

- Making Market Work for the Poor (M4P);
- Market System Approach for Value Chain Development; and
- The USAID Value Chain approach amongst others.

These approaches tend to promote managerial reforms and institutional design in smallholder collective action. They support the formalisation of producer associations, farmers' union and cooperatives. It is believed that this is due to external pressure from external donors and the private sector who are interested in larger supply for smallholder products in a coordinated manner (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a, Markelova et al., 2009). This is evident in the way smallholder collective action programmes have tended to ostensibly favour managerial and institutional design approach (Jones et al., 2012, Barham and Chitemi, 2009, King et al., 2012, Baden, 2013b, 2013a).

In Nigeria, smallholder collective action has gone through different epochal stages. Smallholder collective action during the pre-colonial period was rooted in the communitarian way of life and borrowed significantly from the cultural practices of the community. Means of rewards and sanctions were based on cultural practices and were often well known. The colonial period introduced smallholder collective action based on cooperative and producer associations. The approach initiated during this period has continued to the modern day. However, the approach has gone through several evolutionary stages and currently it is more a managerial and formal institutionalisation. This is viewed by mainstream thinkers and practitioners as the path to smallholder collective action. Despite the successes that have been captured in numerous case studies using the institutional design approach, it is clear that this approach fails to consider social complexities and instead focuses mainly on economic incentives as the motivational factor for smallholder collective action.

This approach is promoted in the literature of the Mainstream Institutionalism (MI), which promotes formalisation and regulated structures. According to

Mainstream Institutionalism, institutions provide information that regulates the behaviour of individual members and ensures that rules and regulations as well the means for organising and reaping benefits are respected. Underpinning this idea is that people can come up with collective design and decide the rules that would govern their relationships with each other by sharing of risk, spreading costs and benefits equitably in a collective way. The assumption is that the potential benefit from working together is enough motivation for collective action. Therefore, it is argued that collective action is better through the design of the institutional arrangement, which will regulate the relations and actions of members (Ostrom, 1990).

Critics of this view like Cleaver (2007), (2012), Osei-Kufuor (2010) and (Toner, 2008b)question the emphasis on formal system, institutional design and managerial components and standards. They argue for Critical Institutionalism (CI), saying that it is a nuanced approach to understanding collective action. They suggest that CI attempts to position power and social relations draws the unpredictable and complex interplay of community life into perspective. The supporters of the CI argue for a better understanding of the interplay between what is perceived as formal by the MI and the informal reality of everyday community life (Lund, 2006). They state that rules, boundaries and processes are fuzzy and peoples' complex identities and unequal power relationships are unlikely to be subjected to institutional design (Osei-Kufuor, 2010, Cleaver, 2007)

This study contributes to such debates by exploring how local complexities and the socio-political and cultural context engage smallholder farmers at the local level towards collective action. The intention is to understand:

i. The nature of collective action institutions;
ii. How institutions of smallholder collective action among smallholders is constructed and formed within local specificities;
iii. The nature of decision making and the factors that motivate smallholders to act collectively;

iv. The model of agency that shapes smallholder collective action functioning;
v. The forces that shape individual smallholder farmers' behaviour within a collective action initiative; and
vi. The potential and practical outcomes of smallholder collective action initiative.

The study uses ethnographic approach to explore the everyday practices of smallholder collective action of rice farmers in Ugbawka; a peri-urban[1] community in Enugu State, Nigeria. Rice is a commercially driven crop in Nigeria and as such the main motivation for farmers is profit and economic incentives. The research focuses on understanding whether smallholder rice farmers are driven by the same motivation factors when they engage in collective action or by other non-economic factors.

Ugbawka presents a good case to study because of the complex realities of communities, where local identities and formal government institutions mix. Its proximity to the State Capital means it has easy access to state institutions unlike other rural smallholder farming communities in the same State.
The thesis argues that trying to understand smallholder collective action based on formal institutional design through the use of cooperatives and/or union and placing emphasis on design principles evades the structural inequality and the differentiated capacities based on livelihoods, power relations and also ignores the diverse motivations, which shape participation in collective action.

I will argue further that institutions that shape collective action at the community are diverse and have different shades of formality and visibility. The rules, boundaries and people are fuzzy and that complex institutions interact to shape the outcomes of smallholder collective action in an unpredictable manner.

[1] According to FAO, *the term "peri-urban area", cannot be easily defined or delimited through unambiguous criteria. It is a name given to the grey area which is neither entirely urban nor purely rural in the traditional sense; it is at most the partly urbanized rural area. Whatever definition may be given to it; it cannot eliminate some degree of arbitrariness.*
Visit http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x8050t/x8050t02.htm

This thesis demonstrates that individual agency is not predicable and not entirely purposive and that the dynamic relationships between individuals and institutions that shape and condition collective action cannot easily be controlled by design and that motivation for collective action can swing based on different incentives which could be determined reactively or purposively.

1.2 Research Problem

Since 2008 when the World Bank released the World Development Report on Agriculture and Development (World Bank, 2007) there has been a huge discourse on smallholder farmers and how they can contribute to poverty reduction and food security. The report moves the discourse on farming away from the big farms to small farms. It also reinforces and recreates a new debate on smallholder collective action and market access. It argues for the creation of cooperative, farmers and producers' union as a way of strengthening smallholder farmers to make them a unified group capable of competing with large companies. As a union they will possess the negotiating power to advocate for better living conditions through improved return on their produce.

The report places emphasis on creating and building formal institutions for smallholder collective action. It argues in favour of designing rules and regulations that would guide such collective action as well as ensuring that the creation and organisation of smallholders through cooperatives and producers' organisation is facilitated by external actors. This research therefore interrogates the meaning, development and practice of smallholder collective action by focusing and investigating smallholder collective action among smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka in Enugu State, Nigeria. The map of Enugu State is provided below and Ugbawka is located in Nkanu East.

First, the meaning of collective action has divided opinion amongst scholars from economical, sociological and political standpoints. Whereas, economics perspective on collective action appears to favour formal institutional structures based on designed rules, regulations, rewards and sanctions, the sociological and political perspectives accept such propositions but argue for a balance and acceptance of the social nuances that could render the designed rules and regulations as well as formal structures impracticable. Most analyses of smallholder collective action that followed the mainstream economics-centred institutional perspective lay emphasis on economic incentives like reducing

transactional cost, collective marketing, collective negotiation and other economic incentives as the core motivational factors (Hellin et al., 2009, Markelova et al., 2009, Devaux et al., 2009, Barham and Chitemi, 2009).

Emphasis on formal and institutionalised collective action for smallholders appears also to have been sustained and reinforced by some international non-governmental organisations working in developing countries with smallholder farmers whose work seem to have closed the door for an organic development of smallholder collective, which is based on local norms and not necessarily formal based on design principles with documented rules and regulations.

This research thus provides clarity on the meaning of collective action by thoroughly interrogating its conceptualisation and evolution. It argues that:

1. Collective action as presented and conceptualised by the mainstream institutional scholars is too simplistic and ignores the complex and messy social structures that interact with actors and shape their understanding of and participation in collective action.
2. There is a problem of lack of clarity underlying the meaning of collective action that further highlights the problems of theoretical expansion and methodological exclusion.
3. There is also the problem of understanding human agency. The question of agency refers to the actor's ability to exercise his/her will either purposefully and reactively and the inability to be predicated correctly at every given time. Particularly, the role of the human agency in collective action functioning is important in understanding collective action beyond the mainstream economics- centred institutional perspective.

This research seeks to understand how smallholder collective action works among smallholder farmers by asking the question:

Does institutionalised collective action among smallholder farmers lead to changes in their participation and access to market?

1.3 Organisation of the Research

The thesis is organised into eight chapters as follows:

The introduction constitutes Chapter I and provides an outline of the main research problem under investigation, the main research questions and key methodological, and theoretical frameworks used to deepen my understanding of the research. The Chapter concluded with the thesis outline.

Chapter Two provides insight into the theories that shape the discourse on collective action at different levels including the local level. The focus of the chapter is to review the relevant literature to identify gaps in the theories and conceptual underpinnings of institutional approaches to collective action. The chapter highlights the linear assumption of the Mainstream Institutionalism approach to collective action. As stated previously, MI seems to narrow its analysis and understanding of collective action to the economic and material aspects and engages in solutions that focus on design of formal institutions as a way of ensuring a functional collective action.

Further the chapter explores the thinking of the critical view that looks beyond the material conditions and institutional arrangements and recognises the need to approach collective action from a critical perspective that recognises the fuzzy and complex nature of social structures and the dynamic nature of power at the local level. This view also argues for recognition of the informal system in an attempt to understand collective action at the local community level. Views that disaggregate formal systems in understanding collective action at the local community level miss the interplay between the social and political forces as well as the link between the formal and informal especially in developing countries where the informal and formal overlap, contribute and shape people's livelihoods. The chapter advocates for an alternative approach to collective action that places emphasis on both the economic/material incentives and formal institutions on one side and also recognises on the other side, the

unpredictability of human agency and, by extension, the socio-cultural and political interplay that shape collective action at the local level.

Chapter Three is the research methodology. It examines the research question and objective that guided the study. It presents the philosophy that underpins the research, discusses the sampling method used in the research, the multiple methods of data collection and analysis and ethical issues applicable to this research. It also discussed the evaluation of the data and how my subjectivity as the research was managed. Data interpretation and analysis was extensively discussed in chapter three while at the same time looking at my position as the researcher and how I managed and turned my subjective feelings into strength. Chapter three also covers the ethical issues and how the researcher managed ethical issues as well as how farmers' rights as participants were respected. Importantly is the fact that, consent in the research location was managed to achieve the overall objective of consent without the farmers signing consent form. This Chapter explains how consent was sought and secured from the participants while respecting community values and way of seeing things.

Chapter Four is the case study chapter and provides a historical overview of smallholder collective action in Nigeria from pre-colonial to post-colonial period. The chapter discusses smallholder collective action based on Nigeria's community cultures and reciprocity during the pre-colonial period and extends it to the colonial period during which smallholder collective action was based on cooperatives and unions, designed, managed and controlled by government.

It is important to note that smallholder collective action during this period was designed to serve the interest of the colonial administration and by extension the metropolis country. The chapter further highlights that colonial system smallholder collective action continued in the immediate post-colonial period and went through a period of inconsistency until the new direction of smallholder collective action that coincided with and followed by the neoliberal market agenda. This chapter argues that smallholder collective action has been mixed; it was initially based on social cultural needs until the period where it was driven by government while at present, it is driven by development agencies.

Chapter Five explores the origin of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. It provides brief development background of Ugbawka and how it has evolved from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. The chapter also explores some important practices like the land tenure system and method of land acquisition for smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka. It examines the different livelihoods classification of the smallholder rice farmers and how the different category access opportunity that allows them to make choices regarding collective action. The chapter further examines some social institutions that support smallholder collective action in Ugbawka and highlights the important role that family, churches and village councils play in collective action.

Chapter Six of this thesis explores the socially embedded practices that shape smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. In doing so, it recognises the important role of informal systems. This is particularly in view of the fact that lives of the local community is made up of socio-cultural and political facets that shape their everyday life (Chabal, 2009b). Within the sphere of informality, the chapter recognises that smallholder collective action is also engulfed in everyday politics of the rural people that requires constant struggle in order to survive and define their aspirations for the future. Such 'everyday politics' a term made popular by Tria Kerkvliet (2009, p. 233)

> "*is different from conventional politics but can be nasty, derogatory…can come as a joke… often impulsive and directed not to achieve unity in many cases but for self-interest and livelihood survival"*.

The chapter also recognises the place of culture in local organising and the fact that cultural repertoires help in understanding individual action because most individual actions are engulfed in desire, frustration, ambition and freedom (Sen, 2001, 2004). The chapter further examines whether collective action occurs within an institutionalised formal system or smallholder collective action is purely motivated by economic and material incentives. Based on the field data obtained from the case study in Ugbawka, the chapter examines how religious affiliation,

political and party politics as well as trust could play an important role in influencing smallholder to act collectively.

Chapter Seven explores the institutional complexity and political dynamics of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. The chapter argues that the Mainstream Institutional perspective overlooks power in smallholder collective action functioning and further illustrates the internal power struggles and how family ties are very important in smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. The chapter also examines how internal collective action politics leads to labour gangsterism and how party politics distorts the working of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka.

Chapter Eight presents the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations for policy. The chapter also reflects on the debate on mainstream and critical perspective on smallholder collective action and argues that institutional collective action perspective is oversimplified and ignores the social parameters and local realities at the community level. It argues for a nuanced analysis that recognises the diverse nature of individual environments and unpredictable nature of individual agency. It also argues that formal and informal settings are as important as each other in collective action functioning at the community level. Access to and participation in smallholder collective action are shaped and motivated by economic, social, political and cultural factors

Chapter Two:

2.0 Conceptualising Institutional Collective Action

2.1 Introduction

Collective action as a concept is not new. It has been used in various academic disciplines including economics, political science, social movement and rural development discourse. It has also been used specifically on smallholder organising together as a group (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a, Bandiera et al., 2005a, Devaux et al., 2009). The variation in conceptualisation and interpretation reflects the diverse nature of the concept as well as its crosscutting multidisciplinary usage.

In this chapter, I explore the diverse interpretations of collective action. I then proceed to review the literature on collective action from the mainstream institutional scholars and the critical scholars while highlighting the key dividing and converging points between the two scholarly sides. An important element of the literature review relates to the arguments between the mainstream and critical scholars on the importance of formal institutions to collective action as against informal structures. The idea of structured and non-structured system based on design principles also featured as an important dimension in the debate. The literature review briefing discussed the agency argument apropos of whether individual participation in collective action is purposive or impulsive and if such participation can be controlled by formalised institutional design with rules, regulations, rewards and sanctions.

This chapter also acknowledges the mainstream argument that economic gains are an important factor in collective action but also recognises the need for a nuanced analysis in determining what motivates individuals to act collectively. With specific reference to smallholder collective action for market access, this chapter argues that as much as economic incentives are part of the rationale for smallholder collective action, it is nonetheless one of the many puzzles that

stimulate smallholder collective action. It highlights and discusses the benefits and motivations for smallholder collective action

2.2 Collective Action: Interpretational Overview

Collective action has always been part of human existence because 'no man is an Island[2] The interconnectedness of the world, the environment and human existences entail that collective action is required for human coexistence. However, further from the primary understanding of human coexistence as a form of collective action, there have been scholarly developments of the concept in various academic disciplines. Each of these disciplines, have tended to construct and interpret collective action from their disciplinary fulcrum. However, at the centre of the collective action concept debate lies an attempt to understand how human beings relate. Those attempts had led scholars to construct and define collective action from diverse interrelated fields but often with different interpretations. Considerable amount of work has been written on collective action and it has also been applied to divergent academic and research strands. The concept still provokes debates and disagreements between and amongst academics and academics on the variables and factors that lubricate and smoothen collective action.

In 1965, Olson emerged with the logic of collective action based on the rational self-interested human being whose natural inclination is to free-ride (Olson, 1965). In 1968, Hardin followed Olson and chided human nature as exploitative of the natural environment (Hardin, 1968). He was particularly concerned of the impact of population growth on the environment. Both Olson and Hardin hold that cooperation is rather not very possible in the use and management of natural

[2] This expression emphasizing a person's connections to his or her surroundings and/or other persons

resources and Hardin reckoned that human beings are heading towards ruin and tragedy due to limitless and selfish exploitation of the natural environment[3].

In 1973, Hardin's analogy of the herdsmen was used by Dawes in the Prisoner Dilemma model who argued that although human beings are self-centred and rational and prone to free-riding, collective action is still possible (Dawes, 1973). Dawes took a rather optimistic perspective of collective action and argued that the fact that the information is available to everyone means that cooperation is eventually possible and inevitable. The availability of information to all players, means that individual rationality will culminate to collective irrationality and hence collective action (Campbell and Sowden, 1985) . Olson's logic also influenced government policies at international scale and generated debates beyond one discipline.

2.3 Acting Collectively; Conceptualising Collective Action

In conventional terms, collective action is often defined as "the ability to refrain from individually profitable actions for the sake of the common good. When individuals come together to participate in development activities, they are said to be acting collectively. However, the manner and nature of acting collectively has been a matter of intense academic discussion and debate and is generally referred to as collective action in most development literature. Therefore, this thesis will not provide a comprehensive review of the collective action theory but could inform the basis for future theoretical analysis.

Many of the theories on collective action consider motivation, incentives, rules, sanctions and other factors that condition individuals to act collectively. Olson logic holds that to act collectively individuals must be forced to conform by rules, rewards and sanctions in a formally structured manner (Olson, 1965). Following this line of thought, the game theory scholars argue that collective action can

[3] Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit- in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination towards which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons 1968 pp 1243 - 1248.

come through greater participation of the individual based on certain codified rules and standards, and that the greater the frequency of participation, the better the positive outcome and further involvement (Anand, 2007).

Getting the institutions right thus underpinned institutional Game theorists' logic. However, this view has been accused of oversimplification of collective action theory by ignoring the existing social relations as well as the informal relations of power in the functioning of collective action (Ratner et al., 2013). Fear of the consequence of non-participation forces individual to collective action thereby making hegemony an essential enforcer for collective action. Scholars such as Ostrom recognise the importance of social relations in collective action but still argue that such social relations can be structured to conform to institutionalised rules and norms (Ostrom, 1990) . Cleaver disagrees with such 'structuralisation' of social relations because it ignores the unequal capacity for differently placed individuals to effect change (Cleaver, 2007). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this view of collective action which lends support to Olson's view oversimplifies individual behaviours and places material gains, strategic interaction, cost-benefit calculations, logic of consequences, relative gains, and individualist rationality at the centre of its analysis and thinking (Acharya, 2012)

The problem with this rational mainstream institutional perspective is that it assumed individuals will always in accordance to rules and standards and therefore ignore the fact that different rules apply to different set of groups depending on number[4].

Another perspective is the view that collective action can occur freely without rational thinking and based purely on acceptance from individual actors. legitimacy rather than control of individual agency is an important determining factor in this sense (Ibid). Therefore, collective action is not only a function of rule, sanction, risk, monitoring and control but also a function of normative

[4] The larger the group the weaker the institution of collective action because of the difficulty in aggregating interests

pressures, disapproval with institutions as well as through social relations. Motivation in this sense does not necessarily lend itself to material incentives or benefits. This perspective broadens collective action to include group resistance, which is closely associated with social movements. The important element in this definition is that, collective action can emanate as a result of inability of certain group(s) to agree to existing status quo and on group conviction to oppose long established system.

While the rationality perspective lends its arguments that effective functioning of collective action depending on the size of the group and the frequency of participation, the constructivist views size as irrelevant to collective action. Micro processes, cultural and normative preferences/pressures and socialization can be much more influential than material incentives and gains. In other words, ignoring the diversity of social behaviour, levels of powers, degrees of capability to participation and cultural and normative influences that can persuade individuals to act in a certain manner assumes that human beings possess, agency.

It is based on the combination of the different views by the rationalist and the constructivist that led to the argument that collective action is dependent upon other capabilities as well as legitimacy and neither is sufficient for collective action (Acharya, 2012). Within this constructivist conceptualisation, trust and reciprocity are far less of a material gain than preservation of cultural preferences and social ties.

In expanding further on the collective action debate, this thesis adopts Cleaver (2012) categorisation of the different collective action perspectives based on the nature of institutions, the formation of institutions, nature of decision making, model of agency, factors shaping human behaviour in institutions and outcomes. As such this thesis groups the review of the literature into Mainstream Institutionalism and the Critical Institutionalism and critically interrogates

literature that dwells on collective action and smallholder collective action in particular.

2.4 Mainstream versus Critical Institutionalism

The Mainstream Intuitionalism includes common property scholars based on New Institutional Economics from the work of scholars such as Ostrom (1990), Ostrom et al. (1994), Ostrom (2005) and North (1990). These scholars content that institutions provide information that regulates the behaviour of individuals and ensures that rules and regulations as well as the means for organising and reaping benefits are respected. Underpinning this idea is the view that people can collectively design and decide on the rule that would govern their relationships with each other by sharing risk, spreading costs and benefits equitably in a collective manner. The potential benefit accruable from working together is enough motivation for collective action. Moreover, agreement will come through the design of the institutional arrangement that will regulate the relationships and actions of group-members. This assertion lean on the view of Hardin (1968) in his tragedy of the common that without control human beings will tap natural environment without limit.

Ostrom, a leading proponent of the mainstream institutionalism, pioneered the design principles arguing for collective action based on cost and benefits as a means of achieving an enduring and lasting governance of group-relationships (Ostrom, 1990, Ostrom et al., 1994). The popularity of this view hinges on the fact that it offers the neo-liberal market thinkers the room to juxtapose participatory ideas and market orientation. In support of the institutional rationality view, Johnson argues that material relations are at the heart of collective action, which influences how to mobilise for collective action and that the creation of institutional arrangements will ensure compliance and end individual free-riding (Johnson, 2004). Therefore, collective action is about the search for collective material gain (Ibid). This assertion is further supported by other researchers who criticized Hardin's tragedy of the commons that captured

human beings as uncooperative. Therefore, the mainstream institutional view seems to have merged the idea of a moral question and economic entitlements in collective action by arguing in favour of formal structural arrangements that reward and sanction individuals (Ostrom, 1990).

The view of the Mainstream Institutionalist stretches to case studies in natural resource management (Agrawal, 2001, Baland and Platteau, 1996, Rasmussen and Meinzen-Dick, 1995, Ostrom et al., 1994) and on agricultural and rural development particularly in smallholder collective action for market access (Hellin et al., 2009, Devaux et al., 2009, Markelova et al., 2009, Baden, 2013b). These case studies that support the design principles place strong emphasis on formalisation of rules and delineating of clear boundaries and rules of engagement.

Emanating from the MI view is the assumption that the nature of institution should be formal with vertical and horizontal linkages as a prerequisite for transparent and accountable collective action. By clearly delineating formal rules, means of resolving conflict will be embedded and channels of complaint and redress will be made clear. Also embedded in the mainstream institutional view is that without formality, obstruction can occur. Therefore, formality "*makes good"* the deficiencies of the indigenous arrangements by transforming the informal into the formal through careful design principles that should serve as indicators rather than blue print (Ostrom, 1990, Wade, 1998, Ostrom et al., 2007, Heikkila et al., 2011).

On the nature of the institutions, the mainstream thinkers see the institution as that arrangement capable of regulating human behaviour and conditioning people to follow stipulated rules or risk sanctions. By primarily focusing on formalising the system, the proponents nonetheless recognise the importance of norms, conventions and self-imposed code of conduct in building an acceptance institutional framework. However, norms and informal constraints can be

conditioned in a way that would reflect the general acceptable condition for participation and use, transforming thereof as means of transmitting information, mediating transactions, facilitating the transfer and enforcement of rights and as a way of managing the degree of competition (Shiferaw et al., 2009, Shiferaw et al., 2008). In other words, formal institutions provide the coordination mechanism for collective action.

Critical Institutionalism (CI) argues against this individual rationality and functionality idea of the MI. This line of thought attempts to position power, social relations and the unpredictable and complex interplay of community life into perspective. It focuses on the interplay between what is perceived as 'formal' by the MI and the 'informal' reality of everyday community life (Cleaver, 2002, Lund, 2006). From this perspective, rules, boundaries and processes are fuzzy and peoples' complex identities and unequal power relationships are unlikely to be subjected to institutional designs (Cleaver, 2007, 2012, Osei-Kufuor, 2010)). Scholars from this perspective call for a more critical and nuanced approach in the discourse of collective action.

CI argue that such labelling of informality and local norms as constraints to collective action presents an analytical notion of informality and local norms as forms of societal disorder. There is obviously a radical contrast between an arrangement focused conception of collective action and a realisation focused understanding of collective action: the latter concentrates on actual behaviour of people rather than presuming compliance by all within ideal behaviour.

Furthermore, critical scholars question the mainstream institutional thinkers' analysis of individual action. Drawing from the rational choice theory, resource mobilisation and the game theory, mainstream institutional scholars view individuals as actors that will act purposively and collectively to maximize their interests given the availability of information. The fear about trustworthiness of others and the extent to which members will follow a morally acceptable pattern of behaviour is said to be dealt with by properly designed rules - individual fears

will be lifted and cooperation assured (Ostrom, 1990). The problem with the mainstream institutional view regarding individual actors comes in various ways.

i. First, the thought that individuals are purposive actors takes away the active and unpredictable nature of human agency from the analysis and assumes that rules, sanctions and rewards are enough to compel individuals to act in a certain way.
ii. Secondly, it also fails to adequately position local complexities into the analysis while attempting to subvert existing norms and local peculiarities as anomalies (Nuijten, 1992b).
iii. Thirdly, it pays little attention to the political dimensions of social interaction (Cleaver, 2012, Robbins, 2010). According to Cleaver (2012) the choices that individuals make regarding their livelihood opens them up to more than one option. Their choices are influenced by a diverse range of factors that are geared towards ensuring the sustenance of the livelihoods which can be based on social concerns, psychological preferences, cultural and historical norms, economic and political needs.

From this perspective, people can be influenced to purposively take part in collective action but are also not immune from acting impulsively for self-interest. Individual actions can also draw from historical precedents and past actions unconnected to present interest as well as from emotional, economical, moral or social rationalities (Boelens, 2008).. Everyday actions of people are not always purposive and can come in the form of careless, impulsive action and struggle for survival. The difficulties that people find themselves in, especially the poor, often push them to explore diverse range of options, which could lead them to draw and act on their different forms of agency. The inequality in power and the differentiated capacity of people in a given situation means that some people are able to use and benefit from collective action more than others. Those differentiations thus place collective action in the realm of resistance,

contestation, conflict, negotiations, discords and misunderstanding in social setting, which are not always reconciled to the satisfaction of all. There are room for hiding emotions as there are opportunities for unpredictable actions. Besides, there is no clear separation between the spheres of private and social life in collective action in most developing countries as there are in developed societies because of the intermix and blurred space between formal and informal systems in most developing countries. There is wider and more anonymous interaction, which draws and mixes both private and social life (Abraham and Platteau, 2004, p. 212).

Bonded rationality as a model of agency as espoused by mainstream institutionalism ignores how conflicts, negotiations, discords and misunderstanding in social relations spill over between private and social life. It neglects how those uncertain outcomes generate potential antagonisms that could propel individual to work against group collective action as a way of getting back at individual relationships and misunderstandings. The wrangles of private life are likely to interfere with decision-making in collective action owing to ill feelings at the level of interpersonal relationships or historical factors. According to Bandiera et al. (2005b), lack of trust could lead to non-participation and resistance to the institution by the individuals.

Some MI proponents have tried to argue that the complexities of local systems and contexts can be captured in a properly designed principle (Poteete and Ostrom, 2004, Meinzen-Dick and Di Gregorio, 2004). However, Cleaver (2002) and Cleaver and de Koning (2015) argue that despite attempts to bring social realities into the analysis and design, mainstream institutionalism has maintained the core notion underlining the idea based on changing local norms and attributing negative connotations to informal processes and systems. There must be a recognition by the MI that informality and local norms are not distortive but part of everyday life of the people. The attribution of negative connotations to ‘informality’ caricatures people’s way of life.

The point of departure is that while MI often focuses narrowly on predictive outcomes through institutional design, the critical view is more nuanced in recognising that designing and improving institutions is less than a perfect solution to situations and processes interwoven with social relationships and interactions among individuals. It can be argued that because MI views the nature of institutions as formal systems designed to correct informal disorder inherent in local systems, they view the role of collective action on informal systems as rehabilitative. Meagher argues that MI ignores the messy and constantly evolving new forms of organisation and interaction through which different cultural orientations are blended in everyday life of people by the juxtaposition of influence from global and local systems (Meagher, 2010).

For CI, organising is not limited to formal institutions but includes a set of informal practices, which are often used differently by different actors either impulsively or purposively and can be very unpredictable. The interaction between people and institutions draws from more than institutionalised formal arrangements. Informal social networks, relationships of reciprocity, patronage, sets of norms and practices rooted in everyday life and routines are all part of institutions and involve (in some cases) little or no organisation, which are often impulsive with no room for reflective action (Tria Kerkvliet, 2009). Organisation as conceived by Nuijten (1992b) is a set of practices and not restricted to formal arrangements; institutions are not things but the results of what people do (Cleaver, 2012), and are continually reproduced, re-enacted and redefined (Cleaver, 2001, Rocheleau, 2001). Rather than viewing institutions as bonded social systems and the object of analysis, a deeper understanding of institutions needs to take a rather more dynamic approach in which institutions should be analysed as a process in which the flow of action of participants are examined by asking more nuanced questions regarding what is going on and the practices of everyday action building around social realities (Nuijten, 1992b, Cooper and Burrell, 1988, Wolf, 1990). Long (1989) argues that there are different scales of

emergent phenomena in institutional interaction, which are intricately interrelated and often do not operate in clearly defined frameworks. Cleaver et al. (2005), argue that they elude design. Hence understanding institutions needs an analysis of the diversity that characterises the actors, through an approach that examines the actions of actors rather than formal organisational action (Scoones and Thompson, 2000, Long and Long, 1992, Long, 2003).

The point that the critical view is aiming at here is that collective action can reflect a mixture of both formal structures and informal interactions through the process of blending. Meagher argues that contrary to the mainstream view, the challenge of Africans lies in bad cultural practices, her research on informal sector in Nigeria shows that, that informal economic institutions and networks are filling the gap created by rapid liberalisation and weakening of the state through the practices of informality built around culture and politics of everyday life (Meagher, 2010). There is also a possibility of institutional design mismatch in a society where operationalisation of formal structures is blurry and incapable of addressing social relationships based on trust and norms (Hellin et al., 2009, Lund, 2006, Lund, 2010). What this implies is that institutions evolve in a contested terrain through both conflict and reconciliation culminating from the juxtaposition of both formal and informal system. It can occur in transition and from an attempt of the state to impose new laws, policies and organisational structure into local settings with different ideas of governance, decision making and ways of ensuring and maintaining power and equity in collective action (Koppen et al., 2007, Sikor and Lund, 2009).

Finally, Cleaver (2002), highlights that mainstream institutionalism is clear, and instrumental, while the critical view provides insight into the complex rubrics of individual interactions which are often fuzzy, continuously negotiable and unpredictable. Whilst MI focuses on rules, constitution, formality and the idea that organisation is formal rather than every day practice and presents a picture of institution in a static form, the critical view interrogates social relations, power,

trust and norms that cannot be designed into sanctions and rules. The next section of this chapter reviews literatures that dealt specifically withsmallholder collective action.

Features	Mainstream Institutionalism	Critical View
Nature of institutions	Formal/public institutions in nested layers with horizontal and vertical linkages	Blurring of boundaries and of scales, blending of institutional logic and forms (e.g. formal and informal)
Formation of institutions	Institutions formed through crafting; design principles characterise robust institutions	Institutions pieced together through practice, improvisation, adaptation of previous arrangement
Nature of decision making	Decision making and negotiations mainly conducted in public fora	Decision making and negotiations embedded in everyday life, shaped by history and politics
Model of agency	Bounded rationality model of agency as strategic and purposeful-individuals as resource appropriators	Agency as relational, exercised consciously & non-consciously- individuals with complex social identities & emotions
Factors shaping human behaviour in institutions	Information, incentives, rules, sanctions and repeated interactions	Social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, individual creativity
Outcomes	Institutions can be crafted to produce efficient resources management outcomes	Institutions evolve to "socially fit": functionality may result in access to or exclusion from resources

Table 1: Mainstream Vs Critical Institutionalism - Culled from Cleaver (2012)

2.5 Is Institutionalised Smallholder Collective?

The 2008 World Development Report by the World Bank (WB) titled *Agriculture for Development* embodies the MI thinking and framework for institutionalised smallholder collective action (World Bank, 2007). The Report proposed that smallholder collective action must be structured in the form of cooperatives, producers' associations and farmers' unions in order to become more effective and efficient.

Producer organizations can engage in more effective collective action to access services, achieve economies of scale in markets, and acquire voice in policy making (Ibid p 138). This idea is underpinned by a number of arguments. On the one hand, researcher emphasize the positive effects of risk-sharing through collective action. According to Shiferaw et al. (2008), for example, institutionalised collective action minimises the risks associated with transaction costs while maximising collective gains and outputs. In research on non-wood forest products in Cameroon, Mala et al. (2012) showed that institutional smallholder collective action requiring risk sharing between smallholder forest farmers led to an increase in the prices of products from 20 per cent up to 100 per cent. The research notes that the positive profit recorded by the farmers is a result of institutional arrangements that allowed the farmers to share transaction costs collectively while spreading the risk and gains evenly.

The second argument relates to power. Burns and Stöhr (2011), recognise the importance of power and note how it is central to institutional arrangements for smallholder collective action. They further suggest that power can vary both vertically and horizontally in smallholder collective action, albeit it is critical for the survival of the unit. Through institutionalised collective action, market power between smallholders and large-scale farmers can be more evenly distributed. Therefore, smallholder collective action serves to balance the asymmetric power that exists between smallholders and big farmers on the one hand and smallholders and buyers/ contractors on the other. Thus, the common proposal for rectifying this power

imbalance according to the mainstream institutional view is to set up farmers' or producer organisations to act collectively and to bargain as a collective unit (Sivramkrishna and Jyotishi, 2008, Glover, 1987, Thorp et al., 2005).

Related to the argument on power is the argument for advocacy and smallholder participation in policy dialogue. It is increasingly argued that institutionalised collective action allows smallholders to participate in policy dialogue and decision-making through group representation and advocacy that would reflect the diverse views of members of the collective. Individual interests are aggregated and pushed into the policy domain through collective action. An example is provided by the work of (Bruns and Brun, 2004) on irrigation in which it was shown that institutionalised collective action was instrumental for policy reforms that changed how the government could provide financial support to smallholders.

There also is the argument that smallholder collective action facilitates innovation and information sharing among farmers within the group. This is in line with the earlier argument regarding risk sharing in the sense that by organising collectively, individual smallholders would automatically share information with others, and will also work collectively towards innovation to improve collective goals. Using the case of Papa Andina network, Devaux et al. (2009) showed how the development of a network of smallholders through institutionalised smallholder collective action generated commercial, technological and institutional innovations, and created new market niches for Andean native potatoes grown by poor smallholders in remote highland areas. They further contend that the benefits of this innovation cut across both smallholders and other market actors (Ibid).

Empirical research that support the MI view appears unanimous on the role of institutionalised smallholder collective action in increasing smallholder participation in the market space. It is also argued that it empowers smallholders to make informed decisions between alternative market choices while ensuring accountability and transparency (Coulter et al., 1999, Rondot and Collion, 2001, Wilson et al., 2011b)

The retinue of case studies on institutionalised smallholder collective action actually substantiate the claims for smallholder collective action based on design principles. However, what the evidence fails to show is if such outcome would not have happened in non-institutionalised smallholder collective action. Secondly, the evidence also falls short of showing if institutionalised smallholder collective action is equal to increased participation of smallholders in collective action functioning. The question that remains open is whether institutionalised smallholder collective action guarantees increased participation of smallholders in collective action.

In chapter one, I mentioned that one of the approaches that emanated from MI institutionalised and designed smallholder collective action is the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P). In this section, I will review whether Promoting Pro-Poor Opportunities in Commodity and Service Markets (PrOpCom) project, which is a Making Market Work for the Poor (M4P) approach funded by the UKAID to facilitate increase smallholder collective action in Nigeria.

An M4P is an overarching approach to development that provides agencies and governments with the direction required to achieve large-scale, sustainable change in different contexts (DFID and SDC, 2008). It focuses on the underlying constraints that prevent the effective development of market systems around poor people**.** An important element of the M4P approach is that it focuses on understanding the system context and can be applied in different sectors to link the poor and the market. Case studies of M4P so far cut across agriculture, finance, investment climate and livelihoods as well as water, health and education sectors. The basic idea about M4P is the facilitation of market-access for the poor. In other words, M4P relies much on third party facilitation between the poor and the market. In the agricultural sector, M4P interventions have been used to facilitate institutionalised designed smallholder collective action for market access. The M4P tries to examine market stakeholders and actors in a holistic and systemic view in order to clearly identify the role each of the actors could play in a particular sector and is keen on functions and rules.

M4P is based on identifying and pursuing the causes rather than the symptoms of constraints. In this sense, M4P prides itself in addressing fundamental problems of poverty through system analysis that allows the underlying issues to be identified. The identification of the issues then leads to identification of the systemic causes of market failures within the particular sectors and how other market aspects could either impede and/or support further development of the sector. M4P believes in the interconnected nature of markets and that markets can also impinge on one another. Therefore, addressing market constraints in one sector could result in addressing constraints in other sectors (DFID and SDC, 2008). In short, M4P's focus is on correcting market imperfections and using the poor as experimental tools[5].

MP4 recognizes the importance of actors within the system, and its focus lies on institutional design, i.e. building membership and setting rules and sanctions. However, this design-orientation takes away actor-oriented interests and perspectives due to its search for perfectly fitting institutions. By identifying yet ignoring the need to focus on the actors, M4P detracts from the actual complexity of human relations and its interaction with the society and social forces.

As a way of forcing actors to function within the designed institutional rules, M4P recognises the need for external facilitation – an organisation that stands outside the market system and facilitates the tinkering of the actors to conform to the system (DFID and SDC, 2008, p. 32). Practically, the role of the external facilitator involves different tasks, which depend on the extent and nature of the system as well as the market constraints to be addressed. Strengthening supply-side capacity, introducing new ideas and innovations, enhancing networks and exchange, providing information, increasing demand-side awareness is the range of tasks assigned to the external facilitator by the M4P framework. However, the role of the facilitator is viewed as temporally because it is assumed that primary actors would eventually take responsibility for liaising and interacting with other market-actors without the service

[5] Most of the farmers as will be shown in interview complained that they were not consulted during the project design and they feel strongly that, the project uses them as experimental tool

of an external facilitator. The role of the facilitator is therefore independent and transient (ibid).

It has been argued that M4P is a viable approach to addressing problems of smallholder collective action and a way through which smallholders can actively participate and engage with the market in the same manner that large corporations engage with the market. Many international development agencies adopted the M4P approach in creating smallholder collective action in different agricultural sectors. Below I use the case of PropCom Nigeria to examine how the smallholder collective action functions using the M4P approach. Let me also emphasise that the PrOpCom M4P is not specifically rooted in the case study of the thesis, but is used in this section broadly to present how institutionalised smallholder collective functions in practical sense in Nigeria.

2.6 M4P: Making Market Work for the Poor

Promoting Pro-Poor Opportunities in Commodity and Service Markets (PrOpCom) is a market development programme funded by the DFID and implemented by Chemonics International in Nigeria. As an M4P programme, PrOpCom seeks to facilitate growth and a pro-poor outcome in the agricultural market in Nigeria (DFID and PrOpCom, 2011). According to report for DFID, the goal is to improve performance of selected agricultural produce in the country. Within the PrOpCom project, Chemonics International plays the role of the external facilitator as envisaged by M4P (Ibid). To implement the project, DFID and its implementing partner Chemonics International identified specific agricultural products to be supported through collective action. Rice, soya beans and cassava were selected as crops that would benefit from the project. The report clearly confirmed that the identification of the products was based on their market importance and attractiveness for private investments. In addition to the products and potential for scale up and mechanisation, the programme also identified crosscutting sectors with potential impact on the selected market products. Business development services, enterprise training and

agricultural policy support were targeted as crosscutting areas for impact on the primary market products.

Based on MI principles, Chemonics International as the external facilitator was responsible for offering a new challenging approach to poverty reduction as the overall objective of the programme, facilitating reforms that were expected to create sustainable and functioning market systems, and communicating outcomes to market stakeholders. Some of their identified responsibilities also include facilitating reforms that would influence all key aspects of the market systems: culture, policy, institutional change, support services, rules and regulations and competitiveness. The external facilitator is also expected to bring innovations to the market quickly in order to test risk-failure as quickly as possible before the project is broadened and scaled up (DFID and PROPCOM, 2009). External facilitator are not expected to deliberately work with and through others but focused on using interventions that consider gestation periods, costs, risks and scale of impact while making decision (DFID and PROPCOM, 2009). As expected in a design arrangement, Chemonics was tasked to leverage links with private investments to participate in the overall programme and to bring investments for scale-up but also to ensure continued support after the initial programme intervention.

To implement the programme, a rice cluster was identified in Abeokuta and Kano and a further analysis was conducted to determine the potential success of the programme. Rice was identified as having the highest potential for economic growth and poverty reduction because of its market attraction. As part of its effort to launch the project in the two states, the facilitator carried out a stakeholder analysis in which it also identified local stakeholders and partners who were interested in investing in the projects and in ensuring its sustainability after initial donor support. The outcome of such campaign and advocacy was the creation of groups of smallholder rice farmers who would act collectively to secure promised benefits from PrOpCom intervention but also to ensure coordinated supply of the products from the farmers to the private sector. This effort also included grants to facilitate the development of a

service market in the project as well as procurements of the necessary facilities needed for the functioning of the project–functional mills and equipment. Furthermore, the grants were also meant to support the capacity-building of the project-implementers, so that operational viability was also part of the effort to strengthen the project for effective outcomes. According to the report, PrOpCom also facilitated the creation of a service network to support the effort of the rice farmers towards the objective of creating a functional smallholder collective action project (DFID and PROPCOM, 2011). These service networks cut across fabricators, engineers, and representatives of technology centres, universities and end users that represented various interest groups.

The brief background above is to show the approach that the PrOpCom project in Nigeria as a smallholder collective action initiative followed in its intervention. Efforts by the external facilitators of the project were to create a smallholder collective action and not to support smallholder collective action. The report highlighted that the different phases of the project were aimed at creating a viable collective action for smallholder rice farmers in the selected areas of the different project states. In an attempt to reform and create an effective smallholder collective action in Nigeria, the PrOpCom-approach followed the MI thinking that espouses the imperative of creating a formal structure through which rules, regulations, sanctions, benefits and other functional elements of the unit would be coordinated. By selecting cash crops as the focus product for the smallholder collective action project, PrOpCom assumed that economic gains are the trigger for increased interest of smallholders. The potential profit from the project was assumed to be a huge incentive for smallholder rice farmers in the selected states to participate actively. However, as indicated in the project's inception report, several months after the end of the capacity support, these networks could not operate independently of the project that birthed them, as the members' main interest appeared to have been to obtain donor funding (DFID and PROPCOM, 2011, p. 22).

Exploring the literature and report on M4P and specifically on PrOpCom reveals that the project was initiated in response to market demands and not out of an organic

need of the smallholder rice farmers to function collectively as a group. Therefore, farmers play little attention to the success of the project because the ownership was in the first place placed in the hands of the facilitators and funders. Further interviews with the farmers and project staff revealed that there was a clear lack of interest and in some cases farmers were persuaded to join the project and often further persuaded to attend project meetings. Most of the farmers were in a sense more interested in the monetary benefits of the meetings and workshops rather than on the prospective of functioning as a collective, and little attention is paid to organising as a functioning unit. This sentiment resonated broadly across the smallholders that are part of the project. In the words (translated version) of one of the interviewed farmers:

> *I was not part of the initiation of this project like many other farmers, I was invited and selected and because I believed there could be benefit, I accepted to join. However, I will not allow this project to derail my farm or other important household activities. If I have the time, I will attend meetings and partake in the discussion but if I am occupied with other work, then, this project will have to wait- how am I even sure of this project if I invest my time and resources in it. It is likely going to go the same way as the other initiatives by other NGOs and government- when this NGO goes, the project will end*
>
> *(Anonymous farmer explaining that his lack of interest is linked to ownership and sustainability of the project- interview conducted in June 2010)*

Further analysis reveals that the farmers are still accustomed to the subsidy policy of the past Nigerian governments and have not shifted focus to the new market approach with minimal government intervention. Furthermore, there is still a very huge gap and lack of linkage between the formal institutions like banks, private lenders, vendors and farmers. Farmers were of the view that the private institutions were not ready to make concessions for the projects to succeed. For instance, one of the farmers revealed that he was asked to use his tractor as collateral. He was certain about his prospects of generating profits to repay the loan, but apprehensive that given a natural disaster or unforeseen causes beyond his control, he risked forfeiting his tractor to the bank. He argued that institutionalised smallholder collective action as

proposed and designed by PrOpCom is in fact designed to benefit other interests than the smallholder interest. Institutional rules espoused such as collateral security is one such critical issue where the smallholders felt that the project was not designed to support them in the first place.

> *Government should do more to protect us. They want us to put down our properties and farm implement as collateral- why would I do that in a project that I am not sure of. I have been living in this village since I was born and cultivate here and sell in the market season after season. If they want to support us, they should talk to government and then provide support. I cannot give my tractor as collateral. It is not that, I will run away with their loan, but I do not know what will happen tomorrow. I have been having good harvest for years, but who knows what might happen if I have bad harvest this year. This tractor will save me if I have bad harvest and I am not willing to put it down as collateral. If they want to help us they can do so, if not they can leave us alone to continue in our own way*
> *(Anonymous farmer who is frustrated at the collateral conditions- Interview conducted in June 2010)*

It was further revealed that the proposed insurance for the farmers did not materialise because farmers felt that investing in insurance within the mainstream insurance proposal would usurp their little capital needed for investment in farming. According to the PrOpCom report, financial institutions were hesitant and in some cases lacked the capacity to innovate agricultural leased product that would benefit the farmers. They were often incapable of undertaking their own risk analysis and required outrageous loan guarantees of farmers (DFID and PROPCOM, 2011). The lack of success of the PrOpCom project appears to question the mainstream rationale for formalisation and institutionalisation of an already functional informal system of smallholder organisation.

There also is an embedded question of trust in the system, which cannot be restored by institutional design. Widner (1991) argues that effective collective action by hitherto informal groups is hindered by the pervasive lack of trust between the informal groups and government/private institutions. This lack of trust is explored further in Chapter four of this thesis. There also is an argument that collective action among informal groups are undermined by weak and limited resources that restricts

the extent to which they can embrace new changes in the market through the full use of their agency (Tostensen et al., 2001) A similar study of the informal sector in Johannesburg, South Africa, found that problems of political powerlessness, legal marginality, weak accountability structure and disaffected membership caused by failed experiences of relying on institutions hinders informal groups from participating in institutional collective action and they are often left vulnerable to opportunistic leadership and state manipulations (Thulare, 2004).

Further evidence from the PrOpCom project reveals that farmers are also very worried about their opportunities and possibilities in a system created *for* them and not *by* them. The fear of elite capture, lack of government commitment for project sustainability and past experience of donor impromptu support and exit were among the major concerns for smallholders to engage actively and to commit to the PrOpCom collective action project. Reno (2008) and Lemarchand (1988) argue that politics of elite capture in which popular political interest are inevitably submerged under a project undermines smallholder collective action functioning. Unashamedly, elite capture has transformed informal systems into agents of government used for achieving political ends – these are repeatedly manifested in donor projects implemented collaboratively with international partners and governments in developing states including Africa such as projects Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda (Reno, 2002)

PrOpCom experience as a smallholder collective initiative in Nigeria demonstrates that smallholder collective action is complex and complicated. It requires an understanding of the need to focus on developmental rather than perfect institutional systems. Furthermore, the project demonstrates how an institutional design approach to collective action attempts to hijack smallholder policy space through its facilitation process.

Policy decisions as pointed out by farmers in relation to insurance were executed by the external facilitators even when the actors involved and primary users were the

smallholders. Thirdly, the project demonstrates that such designed collective action often neglect smallholders input and the influence of their input to the project design by approaching them as recipients rather than as actors. The project design clearly addresses the smallholders as either recipients or as beneficiaries, which underscores the underlying problem associated with the conceptualisation of institutionalised smallholder collective actions[6]. A report for the DFID on PrOpCom, Ahmed, pointed out that, indeed, PrOpCom was not designed for poor smallholders but rather aimed at tweaking market systems to benefit the poor (Ahmed, 2010). An important part of the new form of smallholder collective action is the role played by NGOs as external facilitators. Since the new market initiative on smallholder collective action, various NGOs have acted as external facilitators to different smallholder groups in various products. In the next section, I examine briefly the role of NGOs in smallholder collective action in Nigeria.

2.7 The Non-Governmental Organisations as External Facilitators

Government reforms in the 1980s that ushered in Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) engineered the removal of support to smallholder farmers and promote market oriented policies that focused mainly on the idea of getting the institutions 'right' –, on massive economic growth and on the rural agricultural sector (World Bank, 2004). The expansion of this thinking also led to growth in the role of NGOs in development projects with market imbued orientations including the direct delivery of support to rural households. This led to an increasing focus on mainstream participatory approaches to market interventions, and on the need for external facilitation of market relationships with different actors such as the smallholders. In 2008, the *World Development Report* reemphasised this new role of NGOs by calling for the linking of smallholder to the market through institutionalised collective action that increases the voice of smallholders and grant them access to market information. What the World Bank tried to do was to draw rural growth linkages especially with

[6] 93,000 **beneficiaries** in northern Nigeria benefited from rice intervention, generating $24.3 million in increased income and creating 15,114 jobs; 1,973,163 farmers benefited from fertilizer interventions, creating 1,760 jobs and increasing net income by $56.6 million; 49,000 beneficiaries reached through improved access to farm technologies, creating almost 11,000 jobs and an additional $30.9 million in net income; 185,000 farmers affected by improved agricultural policies in Kano, Ogun, and Adamawa states.

regards to smallholders towards formalised collective action facilitated by an external actor within a formalised institutional system.

The new wave of market and collective action opened spaces for NGO-participation and led to a shift towards the creation of institutionalised smallholder collective action by different NGOs (Bingen et al., 2003). Recent research conducted by Oxfam, Concern Worldwide and Self Help Africa shows that UK Aid to agriculture and specifically to smallholders has been significantly channelled through development agencies and NGOs in recent time (Mikhail et al., 2013). Oxfam International is one such NGO that carved a niche in facilitating institutionalised collective action for different smallholder groups in different developing countries such as China (Bromwich and Saunders, 2012), Ethiopia (Anand and Sisay, 2011) Mali (Dia and Traore, 2011)) and various other developing countries (Minh and Maerten, 2012). Oxfam also points to the advantage of formal collective action for women and marginalised groups (Jones et al., 2012).

In Nigeria, NGOs and development partners manage formal smallholder collective action projects which are funded by different agencies. One of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) projects on smallholder collective action through external facilitators is the Growth and Employment in States (GEMS), which has been on since 2012 and will last up to 2015. It is funded by both DFID and the World Bank, and implemented by Coffey International, the Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE) by Adam Smith International and Pro-Poor Growth Policy and Knowledge Facility and the EFINA programme[7].

The development partners and local NGOs that act as external facilitators of smallholder collective action primarily manage these projects. Some of the projects are also funded by private sector groups with vested interests in particular agricultural products. This particular movement towards privately financed smallholder collective action saw an entry of commercial banks in supporting formal smallholder collective

[7] See https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/countries/NG/

action. For instance, the Stanbic Bank inclusive business model bundles is an initiative that provides exclusionary technical assistance and training with commercial financing to link smallholder famers to formal markets as an example of privately financed smallholder collective action (Stanbic IBTC Bank, 2012). The Stanbic smallholder finance scheme aims to address the gap in agribusiness financing and to increase access to markets for 5,000,000 smallholders over five years (Ibid).

Most of the roles of the NGOs reflected in the creation of new cooperatives and revitalisation of moribund cooperatives have been clearly documented (Bingen et al., 2003). The NGOs are responsible for coordinating and managing the projects and equally for ensuring that the products supply to the market and more precisely to the private corporations who are already linked to the project. It is also argued that NGOs have not only entered into the space, but that the space has also facilitated the emergence of new NGOs that focus specifically on collective action.

However, the NGO form of collective action is in itself exclusive and marginalises other farmers who are not part of the group. It also creates unequal advantage for certain and targeted farmers, thereby creating what is referred to as “market space conflict” by (Porter et al., 2010) . (Bingen et al., 2003) argue that this form of collective action created and managed by NGOs often transforms to loose and opportunistic groups seeking credit and supplies and rarely continues when the donors refocus their funding and their program priorities. Nevertheless, the World Bank (2002) argues that supporting the political voice of smallholder producers within the market space would ensure balance between political power and market opportunities. Another crucial point against the MI approach to smallholder collective action is that it assumes preference of economic incentives above anything else. Therefore, economic incentives are equalised with motivation for smallholder collective action, but is that really the case?

2.8 Is Economic Incentive and Gain Imperative?

Critics of the mainstream perspective on smallholder collective action have questioned the idea that economic incentives lie at the heart of collective action (Porter, 1993, Porter et al., 2003, Porter et al., 2010, Porter et al., 2007, Lyon and Porter, 2009). This thinking ignores the very nature of human beings, and attributes a robotic feature to human agency. Evidence from the literature has shown that collective action can emanate from both economic and non-economic reasons. Lyon and Porter (2009) argue that although the main goal of smallholder farmers dealing on cash crops in the market space might be economic, other non-economic factors can and have influenced their decision to participate in collective action. Non-economic persuasions like trust, policy dissatisfaction and other social relational factors can determine if smallholder participate in collective action – or not.

The motivation for smallholder collective action is not always economic - there is a great importance attached to social benefits which farmers experience by working in groups (Gyaua et al., 2012) This also collaborates with another research which shows that smallholder collective action group formed for economic gains of marketing agricultural products performed better financially and on paper compared to groups which were originally formed in order to satisfy social needs but at the same time engage in economic activity as a product of group cohesion (Gyaua et al., 2012)

Smallholders' collective action can also occur as a resistance towards established authorities, and express a quest for freedom from existing institutional arrangements. When the latter works against some farmers' personal or social bias, it could lead to collective action aimed at forging and creating alternatives. Other non-economic incentives include the perceived clarity regarding conflicts with social norms and values like trust and other important moral orders. Lyon and Porter (2009) argue that despite institutional design aimed at governing interactions in smallholder collective action, motivation for collective action in Nigeria draws significantly from expectations of others. As such, formal arrangement and perceived economic gains are not enough to motivate Nigerian smallholders to act collectively. In such cases, personal

trust is a motivation for smallholder collective action because laws cannot possibly cover all contingent circumstances (Moore, 1994). In other words, "*I know him*" is more valued in collective action than "*we have rules*" (Lyon and Porter, 2009, p. 912).

This also demonstrates that the assurance of trust as opposed to economic incentives is a strong motivation for smallholder collective action. It also challenges approaches that merely understand different cultures as low or high and fail to properly distinguish between personalised and institutional trust, and the roles both types of trust play in collective action. Therefore, farmers often seek information and are more interested in individual members of the group rather than in the strength of the law as the main determining factor for their participation in collective action. Evidence from Lyon and Porter (2009) demonstrates that MI thinking that economic incentives are enough to foster collective action for smallholders failed to take into account the social realities of everyday life of smallholders within the social terrain within which they coexist. It also shows that formality does not necessarily guarantee collective action functioning for smallholders while at the same time it endorses the view that informal social relations can lead to strong bonding and collective action for smallholder farmers.

While the critiques of designed institutionalism as the basis for smallholder collective action are beginning to grow outside the neoliberal market, we are faced with the problem of balancing the analysis of the diversity of factors that motivate smallholders to engage in collective action. Although economic incentives are important motivating factors, there are other important factors that drive and facilitate smallholders' collective action. While it is crucial to remain open about accepting the role economic incentives can play and the need to institute rules that ensure compliance in order to reward and sanction members, the idea that economic incentives are paramount is unconvincing - other social cultural realties are as important if not more than economic incentives.

Critics of this approach like Cooke and Kothari (2001) argue that participation has become the new tyrant and an approach through which neoliberal development is

foisted on the Global South (Williams, 2004). Indeed, participation as a concept, which often interrelates with collective action, is accused of placing too much emphasis on personal reform and conformity to institutions but ignores realities of political struggles associated with community life. It is also accused of obscuring local power differences by placing too many celebratory emphases on "the community" (Williams, 2004). In essence, the MI approach avoids context by ignoring the contextual realities that inform individual actions and misunderstands power dynamics that shape human interactions (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p. 14). What is thus required is an approach that accept the strengths of the MI approach but also spreads towards the sociopolitical realities of smallholder collective action.

2.8 Towards a Nuanced Approach to Smallholder Collective Action

The literature on collective action as so far discussed and examined has revealed that when applied within the context of smallholders, collective action is multifaceted, complex and contains myriads of interesting aspects that cannot be easily subsumed under a particular theory. Issues of power, authority, social norms, culture, and political associations appear to remain very much embedded in the discourse of smallholder collective action while at the same time, economics of 'who gets what and how (Lasswell, 1936)' continues to resurface. In addition, the literature suggests that a particular pattern of successful smallholder collective action might not be replicated in another context. In short, the complexities of smallholder collective action appear messy and based on local specificities that might cut across groups, level of interaction with external actors, economic interests, livelihood sources, age, gender and tribal or extended family lineages. Imperatively, the practice of smallholder collective action from the CI perspective should engage with local socio-political, cultural and economic realities.

The review of the literature also revealed that although different scholars and disciplines have interpreted collective action differently, none could essentially be faulted completely. Each of the interpretations and viewpoints lends itself to some of the functioning of smallholder collective action and ways in which smallholder

organise themselves as collectives in different parts of the world. Early authors like Olson argued that collective action should be viewed from an economic perspective (Olson, 1965), other scholars that followed have tended to deviate slightly in favour of a design principle approach that will consider non-economic factors (Ostrom, 1990). Recent scholars also tend to be divided along economic and non-economic factors and scholars like Toner argued that perhaps, an approach rooted in local culture could offer a better understanding of rural collective action and participation (Toner, 2008b). There are also others who argue for a wider conception of politics and power in order to understand collective action (Osei-Kufuor, 2010) The result of this diversity in the discourse on smallholder collective action has therefore led to different understandings of what smallholder collective action means to different people.

The economic theory perspective views smallholder collective action as an economic activity of the farmers aimed to achieve economic gains and benefits. This angle has influenced many international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like Oxfam, whose design of smallholder collective action project has followed this line of thinking (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a, Baden and Harvey, 2011). Therefore, smallholder collective action from this viewpoint is to manage common resources and to attract better economic returns. As cooperation is important, it is necessary and imperative (Gyaua et al., 2012, Gyau et al., 2014). Therefore, it is a means of gaining and sharing surplus by the farmers collectively.

Another perspective assumes that smallholder collective action is solely a voluntary means of assemblage by smallholder farmers without any economic undertone. Collective action is understood as a cultural practice handed over from generation to generation, though exhibited in both economic and non-economic manner (Fischer and Qaim, 2014). This perspective links to the viewpoint that relates smallholder collective action as part of community exercise by farmers and as a means by which decisions amongst the farmers are taken democratically. This view is also related to the participation theory that assumes that participation through collective action brings

empowerment and development (Chambers et al., 1989, Chambers, 2003, Chambers, 2014).

Interpreting smallholder collective action as a way of counter-organising and/or resisting also resonates in other academic work. This perspective links to the activities of smallholder farmers in Latin America such as the La Via Campesina[8] who organise in the form of unions and mainly act to oppose government policies and initiatives on farming and to challenge the international capitalist system (Borras Jr, 2008, Isaacman, 1990, Desmarais, 2002, Desmarais, 2007, Desmarais, 2008).

The Critical scholars recognise these divergent views, the myriads of issues and the complexities that could foster smallholder collective action including economic and non-economic factors. They recognise that smallholder collective action could not be situated within a linear perspective and advocate for a nuanced approach that would recognise the socio-cultural, economic and political imperatives. Such an approach would acknowledge individual actors as active agents while putting power, differentiated access and capacities at the centre of discussion to critically interrogate individual actor's abilities to influence their everyday agency through personal, political or strategic means.

For this thesis, I propose to use Critical Institutionalism (CI) as adapted by Cleaver Cleaver (2012) to theorise collective agency. CI recognises

a. the blurring of boundaries and of scales, blending of institutional logic and forms (e.g. formal and informal) in the nature of institution;
b. That institutions are pieced together through practice, improvisation, adaptation of previous arrangement;
c. That decision making and negotiations embedded in everyday life, shaped by history and politics influences collective action;

[8] For more on La Via Campesina kindly visit https://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44/what-is-la-via-campesina-mainmenu-45

d. Recognises agency as relational, exercised consciously & non-consciously by individuals with complex social identities & emotions;
e. That social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, individual creativity play critical role in making collective action work; and
f. That institutions evolve to "socially fit": and that functionality may result in access to or exclusion from resources (Cleaver, 2012).

2.9 Conclusion

The call for community-development recognises the value of collective action and participation, and has been central to mainstream institutional approaches. However, buzzwords like participation, empowerment, and collective action are often used uncritically by painting a picture of harmonious community development while seriously ignoring the critical relationship between people and their society. Of particular concern is the way in which local community's way of life has been treated and conceptualised in a derogatory manner, e.g. connoting concepts such as informality very negatively. Glaringly ignored are the power dynamics entailed in collective action as well as the influence and mix of cultural tendencies and repertories in community life. For instance, Nuijten (1992b) argues that the lack of analytical understanding of forms of local organisation is in part due to the persistent notion of formal rationality implicit in the mainstream development approaches to rural development.

The mainstream view on smallholders' collective action often overestimates the agency of the smallholders and pays little attention to the different meanings that local forms of organisation have for people, and the way they apply them whilst participating in collective action. It is also criticised for failing to appreciate the role of existing forms of organisation as it views the informal way of life as distorting and an exception to the rule. Drawing on sociological theory and on the works of scholars like Long and Long (1992), Nuijten (1992) and Meagher (2010) argue that it is crucial to recognise organisation practices not from the formal perspective as a bonded social system but from the perspective of processes. This means a set of practices that can

take forms in which smallholders organise themselves in everyday life drawing on a mixture of political and cultural tendencies (learnt, evolving and traditional). This set of practices allows for the hybridising of formal and informal culture while recognising the individual actor's ability to act purposively and impulsively based on human beings' internal pluralistic nature and capabilities.

As a framework for analysing and understanding smallholder collective action, this research adapts the critical school of thought that recognises the role of social realities, informality and power dynamics in collective action. Meagher (2010) offers a way to analyse the complex interplay and the socio-cultural relationships that often occur in collective action functioning by recognising the evolving relationships between the formal and informal structure. Cleaver argues for a recognition of all the factors that interact in collective action (Cleaver, 2007). In order to be able to make sense of why primarily, economic motivation is not the only motivation for smallholder collective action, we must bear in mind that the rural informal system is the way of life of the people and not an anomaly or a disorder. Again, while recognizing the dynamic and evolving nature of culture that takes different forms and often opposes each other within a given society, we must also accept that politics does underscore the everyday life of rural smallholders.

Chapter Three

3.0 Research Methodology: Context and Interaction with Rice Farmers

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology for this thesis by discussing its theoretical and conceptual framework. It explains the approach and how the research was conducted, discusses the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- The first section of the chapter examines the methodological foundation of the research.
- The next section then discusses the rationale for conducting the research and is closely followed by the research objective and research question before presenting the thesis's theoretical orientation.
- The third part then examines the data gathering, analysis and interpretation; it discusses how data was gathered, collated and subsequently processed and analysed.
- In the final section presents the research ethics, an insight and evaluation in the conduct of the fieldwork and the issues of reflectivity.

This research adopts Critical Realism (CR) as a philosophical perspective and accepts to engage in the process of extracting, creating and analysing data from the complex and mix layers of the social world. I also accept that these layers are interdependent and socially embossed and require a permeation of the social realm to uncover the interdependences. The task which this research demonstrates is that original knowledge, is generated through data collected and interpretation. Constructing and negotiating narratives through data collection methods such as interviews require an understanding that agency can (re) create and be created by structures. In this research, data analysis avoided interpretive procedures that deconstruct subjects into socially derived elements by ensuring that individual cases

become the point of discovery and the starting point of inferences about social structure (Rustin, 2002, Toner, 2008b).

This research does not in any way claim knowledge or offer explanations on deeper realties of social structures but makes tentative inferences concerning the relationship between individual agency and structural factors in smallholder collective action. To avoid contestation of which data collection method is best suited for this research, I used a range of methods, adopting qualitative techniques through triangulation, which is a means of learning from the data and seeing the data in different ways (Harriss, 2002, May, 2011, Olsen, 2005).. It also used numbers to represent the characteristics of the farmers.

Furthermore, this research also takes an actor oriented approach and combined it with institutional analysis in order to examine critically the interplay between actors and institutions and how individual agency and structural factors shape outcomes of smallholder collective action.

3.2 Research Rationale

My interest in this research is a culmination of both my professional experience and my academic interest. Firstly, as a Programme Officer with Actionaid Nigeria, I was involved with projects that supported smallholder farmers in different states in Nigeria. The aims of the projects were to support rural agricultural development especially in the areas of food security and market access for rural smallholder farmers. I observed that much of the projects focused on creating systems for smallholder farmers but not on supporting the existing systems of smallholders. The projects borrowed significantly from neoliberal market paradigm and were more interested in creating market space for private investors through smallholders' collective action.

Another important aspect I noticed was that there was lack of interest from the smallholders who were part of the projects. It was during my time with Actionaid Nigeria that I started reflecting on smallholders' collective action that would be based on farmers' cultural practices and embedded in a system that are rooted in the

farmers' way of life. The problem of lack of interest from the smallholders was also widespread in other parts of Nigeria where I worked in other agricultural projects that whose objective was to support smallholders to gain access to the markets. There was also an apparent lack of support from state agricultural institutions and ministries. This was surprising especially given the role smallholders played in Nigerian economic development in the pre-colonial and colonial period before the discovery and boom of oil and they continue to play a significant role in the current post-colonial period.

Apart from the obvious absence of the state investment in smallholders' development, I also noticed that smallholder rice farmers in some parts of Nigeria were tied to middlemen due to individualism and inability to organise collectively. The gap between the final market price of rice in Nigeria and the price at which the smallholder sold to middlemen was very significant. The gap in the final price was huge and smallholders who cultivated the rice gain little profit from the overall rice market. There was also clear lack of information and access to input was also rare. Smallholder farmers have relied on their indigenous skills in the acquisition of agricultural inputs, value addition and marketing of their produce without support from the state and within a context of huge infrastructural gaps and decay.

With that initial interest in smallholder farming, in 2007, I began a Master's degree in International Development Management and was particularly interested in smallholding in Africa and model of collective action that could support their organisation as a unit. That eventually culminated into my MA dissertation, which was on the impact of economic globalisation on smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. The dissertation was based on desk research and relied on secondary data and was conducted in six (6) months. The research pointed to several areas for further inquiry, including a critical understanding of the position, interaction, relationships and conditions of the smallholders in the market and how smallholders can best organise themselves as a unit rather than individuals.

The insight that I gained during my MA in International Development motivated me to explore alternatives for smallholder farmers in Africa. The 2008 World Development Report was an important literature that expanded my interest in smallholder collective action and influenced my MA dissertation where I examined the impact of economic globalisation on cotton, rice and coffee smallholder farmers in Burkina Faso, West Africa and Ethiopia respectively. This thesis therefore is borne out of my interaction with smallholder farmers in Nigeria and my academic interest during my MA studies.

The study seeks to understand smallholder collective action from a nuanced perspective including what motivates individual smallholders to act collectively. Particular attention is on the specificities, the motivation, incentives and interest to participate in collective action and the relationship that transpire amongst the smallholders within a particular context. In 2008, the World Bank underscores the imperative for smallholder development for poverty reduction (World Bank, 2007). That snowballed into divergence of frameworks on making the market work for smallholders through collective action in form of producer organisations, cooperatives and farmers unions. Evidence from the literature suggests that most smallholder collective action projects are adopting private market oriented approaches to smallholder collective action underpinned by the MI approach based on making institutions work for the poor. This approach has been criticized due to its lack of attention to the dualism of individual agency and the overreliance on institutional arrangements as the panacea for bringing smallholders to work collectively as a unit. Less attention is paid to the other social factors that inhibit smallholders' participation in collective action and also the impact of sudden change in rural communal life on the motivation to participate in collective organisation.

Like institutional decentralisation, institutional formation of smallholder collective action is oversimplified in policy documents but the reality is messy and complex and requires more than designed principles structured to ensure enforcement of rules, regulations and standards (Besley and Coate, 2003) There are concerns by scholars that institutional arrangements for participatory social organisation are prescriptive

and more likely to exclude the weaker and poorer in the rural communities (Hickey and Mohan, 2005, Franks and Cleaver, 2007). There is also similar concern that the institutional approach to collective action is incapable of renegotiating norms or challenges inequality that hinders claims of rights and access to resources because of the agency's influence which shapes and is shaped by social relationship and institutions (Cleaver, 2007, Toner, 2008b). The institutional arrangement on smallholder collective action reduces human agency to a controllable object while the reality is messy and unpredictable.

The research was undertaken in Ugbawka, a rice farming community in Enugu State, South Eastern Nigeria. Ugbawka is a peri-urban community in the eastern axis of the state. I collected the data between January and October 2010. The research contributes to the debate on the distributive and allocative power of smallholder collective action for market integration by exploring ethnographically the socio-political and cultural realities that influence the formation, participation and practice of smallholder collective action.

3.3 Research Question

The main research question guiding this thesis is:
Does institutionalised collective action among smallholder farmers lead to changes in their participation and access to market?
The main objective of the research is to collect and critically evaluate the evidence and determine whether institutional collective action results in the participation of smallholder farmers in the market.

Anecdotal evidence as previously discussed suggests that there is little participation among the smallholder farmers in Nigeria in collective action. This therefore poses the question as to why would smallholder farmers opt against institutionalised collective action despite presumed market gains and possible economic incentives?

3.4 Research Objectives

The study explores the influence of socio-political and cultural factors in smallholder collective action and examines whether designing of institutional rules is enough to guarantee individual smallholder farmer's participation in collective action. The following are the specific objectives of the research:

- To examine whether the design of institutional arrangement is enough to spur collective action among individual smallholders and guarantee compliance by members; and
- To explore the extent of influence of socio-political and cultural factors on smallholder collective action functioning.

Examining the research objective requires an exploration of the practices of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka in order to understand the factors that motivate smallholder to engage in collective action and to explore why some farmers would opt for inaction despite potential market benefits. In this research, emphasis is placed on the action and interaction of smallholder farmers as social actors and their engagement with diverse institutional arrangement and how their interactions inform the outcome of their organisation as farmers within a group. These thinking guided the design of this research.

3.5 Research Case Study

In order to achieve the study objective and research question, Ugbawka was selected as the case study for the research and smallholder rice farmers was also chosen as the research participants. The choice of Ugbawka was informed by two important and interrelated factors. First is that in order to answer the research question, it is important to select crop whose primary reason for cultivation was cash. In other words, cash crop would situate the research question better to be able to investigate the motivational aspect of smallholder collective action. Secondly, Ugbawka also represents a community that has witnessed a mixture of informal smallholder collective action and formal institutionalised forms of smallholder collective action.

Whilst smallholders in Ugbawka have maintained their ties to their informal systems of organising collectively, some have participated in previous projects that are based on formalised smallholder collective action. Three of such projects in which Ugbawka smallholder participated and are still participating are examined in this thesis in chapter five. Ugbawka has also continued to retain elements of smallholder collective action based on embedded social practices. Therefore, Ugbawka smallholders present a combination of farmers who were involved in projectized smallholder collective action as well as community socially embedded smallholder collective action. As a peri-urban community closer to the capital city, it presented a particular research motivation to see how community and city life influences the farmers especially in view of their access to State capital and their attachment to community life. The case study approach was important in order for the research to be holistic within a particular context and for phenomena to be understood in relation to their interaction with the social environment (Fox-Wolfgramm, 1997).

3.6 Data Collection Approach

This research takes a Critical Realist perspective that recognises the existence of deep social structures and strives to uncover real the essence of social phenomena. It also takes a qualitative descriptive and data based approach that focuses on generating data from the natural setting in order to allow for high level of interpretive, holistic and reflective reasoning (Creswell, 2014). In gathering the data, I will use a combination of an interventionist model and a sociological approach that allows me to be guided by theories, but at the same time open to new ideas that can initiate, refute and/or organise the theories better (Long and Long, 1992, May, 2011) Data was therefore collected through a combination of primary and secondary means.

To examine and critically deepen the understanding of the dynamic relationship of individual smallholders as members of a collective action group and the interplay between group structure and individual agency, I adopted a research design based on qualitative narrative and non-numeric approach (Mason, 2002), to understand individual smallholders' meanings and accounts of the events and the underlying

reason behind their actions in a collective action setting (Maxwell, 2005). The research therefore adopted an actor-oriented approach to illuminate the details and significance of social practices and interactions as they occur differently to different individual smallholders (McLeod and Thomson, 2009).

3.6.1 Actor-Oriented Approach

The actor-oriented approach provides a wider framework for analysing the choices and the rationale that underpin the choices of individual smallholders. The emphasis is on studying and understanding social actors and how they interact with their social milieu differently (Long and Long, 1992). Therefore, great attention is paid human agency within the context of the recursive relationship between agency and structure (Giddens, 1984) . The concentration on social actors is a key feature of the actor-oriented approach and is also based on mapping and reviewing relationships and the flow of information between actors in order to provide the basis for reflection and action (Biggs and Matsaert, 2004). Its theoretical foundation reflects the flaws of the conventional structural development ideologies and approaches and acknowledges the complex interaction that occurs between actors in social setting (Long and Long, 1992, Biggs, 1997, Jackson, 1997, Grindle, 1997). The actor-oriented approach is equally very particular on the important of participation, empowerment and the reliance on local actors as the possessor of local knowledge (Nemes, 2005). This approach considers social actors as reflective and subject actors who are aware and capable of controlling their interaction with the social environment including taking responsibility for the outcome of their actions (Greener, 2002, Hoggett, 2001, Giddens, 1984).

The Action orientated approach holds that social actors are not mere observers and objects in the social environment. They are not controlled by institutional settings and arrangement but rather employ structural arrangements to suit their day-to-day interaction with each other. According to Giddens (1984), we are not merely observers but reflective agents who are capable of giving account of our actions and the underlying reasons behind our thinking. Although, social actors might not always

give an articulated account of the rules that inform their action, they nonetheless will demonstrate tacit and practical knowledge of their action (Hoggett, 2001). Long and Long (1992) argue that despite the transformative changes and the influence of external actors like the state in our everyday interaction with each other, it does not necessarily deflect social actors from acting reflectively but rather, they become part of the system which social actors interact, mediate and transform.

The value of this approach lies in its understanding of social change as something which results from interplay between both internal and external factors as well as between structure and agency in a relationship that recognises the centrality of human action, consciousness and consequences. It therefore positions the research to look beyond the structures, which might have changes overtime to actions of individual social actors. According to Osei-Kufuor (2010, p. 70), it provides the researcher with the analytical lens to examine how different and specific knowledges are shaped by social reality and the platform to examine the differences in actors' abilities and power dynamics in social relationships. The Actor-oriented approach equally reveals to the researchers the divergent responses that might come from different actors within the same social setting using the same resources. According to Hoggett (2001), we always have choices albeit not in all circumstances of our own choice but are always re-inventing our choices to suite the changing circumstances engineered by structural and external changes. Therefore, the actor-oriented approach positions the researcher to understand the extent to which changing circumstances apply to individual social actors differently to either a subject agency who can control their interaction with the social setting or as an object agency who are incapable of responding to external changes. In other words, it employs the researcher to examine both the intended and unintended consequences of external imbued change.

3.6.2 Critical Institutionalism and Actor Oriented Approach

The actor oriented approach equally recognises the six-point framework of the research based on work of (Cleaver, 2012, pp. 16-24). Cleaver (2012, p. 56) argues that a narrow focus on form institutionalism ignores factors such as history, politics and geography as context and conceptualises social relations, culture and norms as forms of institutional glue, which should be drawn upon to support formal institutions. In short these is rejected as anomaly, which bring disorder to the system. The Actor oriented approach on the contrary recognises the first blurry nature of institutional boundary. Reality to an actor-oriented researcher comes from many different institutional domains and arenas (formal and informal) (Long, 2003, p. 47) and argue for the nesting of both sides of the institutional domain in our analysis of individual reactions to the society.

The actor-oriented approach therefore offers insight into the smallholder farmers' everyday life, the decision-making processes and how their decisions are linked to other broader social relations with their environments including external factors. It understands not only the formal processes that individuals are bound to obey but also how informal processes and practices including previous historical arrangements shape institutional outcomes. The research framework based on Cleaver offers the same interpretative understanding, highlighting that the formation of institutions is beyond crafting and designing of rules, occurring rather through piecing together practices, improvisation and adaptions of previous arrangements (Cleaver, 2007, p. 16). The framework is used to understand elements of Ugbawka practices that shaped and blended to form their way of life. Reality to an actor-oriented researcher comes from many different institutional domains and arenas of social action (Long, 2003, p. 47). Knowledge is therefore a combination of multiple realities and the co-existence of different decisions, actions, interpretations and application of different experiences.

Through an actor oriented approach embedded in Critical Institutionalism, individual smallholders' everyday life will form the focus of analysis in understanding decision

making processes of the farmers. Historical trails and traces that shape individual actor behaviour and interaction with society and their influences on the farmers' decision making are better understood and analysed through actor oriented approach. Therefore, variables like trust, which is a recognised form of social relation in the rural setting are important in this approach (Dionysiou et al., 2005). Epistemologically, the actor oriented approach aligns with the CI framework for this research in that both accept that knowledge is derived from multiple realities which can be interpreted differently from various understanding and experiences. Reality is not out there to be discovered, it comes by exploring meanings, raising the how and why questions and by attending to propositions and constructing meanings (Sumner and Tribe, 2004). In addition,, CI views decision making as part of embedded practices and accepts the suitability of ethnographic methodological design in order to understand everyday life of the actors and the process by which images, identities and social practices are shared, contested, negotiated, and sometimes rejected (Long, 2003, p. 48). It calls for reflectivity in understanding to be able turn subjectivities to analytical advantage.

The narrative freedom associated with actor oriented approach applies to the CI framework. This research applies a relational approach to agency in understanding the actions of individual smallholders as agents. Their actions are viewed as varied, with complex social identities and emotions, but not as bounded and static pursuing only strategic and rational goals. In its approach to data collection, this research undertakes to look at social structures, power dynamics, relationships, norms and actor's creativity as important elections that shape how individual smallholder's behaviour. While rules, regulations, rewards and sanctions within smallholder collectives are important factors, they nonetheless do not cover the gamut of factors that shape the behaviour of the different farmers. This research framework based on the Cl six-point framework provides guide.

Using the CI six-point framework as an embedded approach in data collection provides a good framework for understanding how different actions of different actors could result to different outcomes; positive or negative and for the research to accept

that outcome of collective action is not necessarily pre-determined and does not always produce desired outcome. Outcome vary for different actors.

While the actor oriented approach is criticised for focusing narrowly on the local realities and less on the interaction between local actors and the external institutions and structures, the Critical Institutionalism's six-point provide the framework for understanding of both the local and the external; the formal and the informal. This CI framework by Cleaver (2012) also provides the framework for understanding agency and interactions within institutions and not in isolation from institution.

Social life is complex and our capacity to decipher specific issues depends on our understanding of the wide diversity of social forms and cultural repertoires that influence different actions. Analysing contextually and examining the differentiated capacities, power dynamics and the process by which social processes are produced, reproduced, consolidated and transformed beyond structural outcomes is imperative in social research of this nature. Thus this research is interested in the mechanism by which the farmers are empowered, constrained and equally disempowered differently. Adopting an actor-oriented approach and using the Critical Intuitionalism six-point framework provides insight into the farmers as social actors within a collective unit. This is therefore crucial in answering the research question that seeks to understand whether institutionalised arrangements guarantee smallholder collective action.

3.6.3 Ethnographic Approach to Data Generation

Social life is heterogeneous or polymorphic (Long, 2003, p. 49), it throws up new changes and realities on a daily basis (Osei-Kufuor, 2010, p. 79) and there are bound to introduce various forms of social orders, accommodations, oppositions, separations and contradictions and various actors are engaged in different meanings and practicalities of livelihoods, values and organising process (Long and Long, 1992, Arce and Long, 2000). Clifford Geertz also wrote that culture is intrinsically incomplete and that the more deeply it goes, the less complete it becomes. Therefore, to commit oneself to semiotic nature of culture and an interpretative approach is to commit

oneself to the ethnographic assertion of what is essentially contestable (Geertz, 1973, p. 29).

My decision to adopt an ethnographic approach in gathering data borrows strongly from the views expressed by the authors in foregoing paragraphs. I therefore adopted ethnographic case study in gathering data in order to understand the underlying social realities of smallholder farmers in Ugbawka community. Ethnographic study seeks to understand and document the daily lives of communities and social groups and to illuminate the details and significance of social practices and interaction as they happen and unfold in the present (Atkinson, 2001). It is underpinned by its deep focus in uncovering history, meanings, social structures and power relations. It is focused in understanding how people interpret and apply the world around them and it gives researchers the space and commitment for first-hand experience of the life of social actors within a specific socio-cultural setting.

The positive of using ethnography is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of methods in generating data and gives room for multiple data sources (Mason, 2002, p. 52, McLeod and Thomson, 2009, p. 80). Similarly, researchers using ethnographic approaches are well placed to look beyond predetermined settings and generate data across all settings without restriction to already defined settings (Webster and Engberg-Pedersen, 2002). It provides researchers with the opportunity for "*immersion"* and to investigate more deeply into the practices and conceptions of social actors looking deeply at the interplay between actors' cognitive and dynamic relations with the structures and institutions that attempt to shape their lives. Another utility of this approach is that it allows the researcher to observe routines and disruptions to the daily activities thereby allowing the opportunity for changes to be captured as they occur. Overall, ethnography avoids rush and encourages in-depth study, which places the researcher in a position to distinguish between routines and exceptions (Nayak and Kehily, 2008).

Since this research adopted an actor-oriented approach which sees social action as implying both social meaning and social practice (Long, 2003, p. 47), I employed different data collection methods that reflect and enrich the actor-oriented ethnographic approach. I used semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation and informal group discussions. The adoption of multiple data gathering methods allowed me to compare processes and enhance completeness of data. It also gave me the advantage of seeing things in context and to review historical antecedents' associated with events. I used triangulation to observe different actors, settings, events and to understand their divergent roles. Applying more than one method in generating data enabled me to think critically about the strengths and weaknesses of each method and to try to complement each method with the other. It was also an opportunity for me to move around different research strategies in order to generate credible data for answering the research question and in achieving the research objective.

Using ethnography provided me with first-hand experience in observing and discussing with the smallholder farmers in effort to understand their activities and action as it relates to collective action. By applying an actor-oriented ethnographic approach with the use of multiple data generation methods, I explored various smallholder farmers' motivation for collective action and the meaning and understanding these farmers attached to collective action. I examined their experiences of collective action and how previous experiences of collective action influence and shape their decisions to engage in collective organisation as farmers. I also examined how access to resources shaped their decision to either participate or decline from collective action. Ethnography also helped me to explore both the internal and external dynamics of power and influence on access to different types of power on smallholder collective action. It was useful for me to observe the interaction that occurs in community settings. I was able to observe interactions in the market and also the social relations in the rice farms as well as community gatherings and market meetings. I also sought to find out the structures and institutions that influence the farmers' decision to participate in collective action and how those institutions are historically linked. I further examined the change and interferences in community level

authority and influence of new democratic space in Nigeria in relation to how political capital plays an important role in smallholder collective action. Using ethnography and living in the community amongst the people provided me with a unique platform to understand the different ways power holders exercised their agency and how they derive their legitimacy from the people. I also examined the differentiated capabilities and gender disparity in access to and control of resources for collective action. Using an ethnographic approach provided me with the research lens to observe and interpret the different ways in which people exercise their agency and the way in which power is diffused and legitimised through interaction between different social actors.

3.6.4 Negotiating Access and the Research Sequence

In the Case Study section, I discussed the rationale for selected Ugbawka as the case study for the research. The decision regarding the country and community the research would focus on was a sole decision, although approved by my supervisor. I am from Enugu State, the same state as the case study community and I speak the same language; Igbo, which is the native language of the people of Enugu State in South East, Nigeria.

The research was designed with the view that working with smallholder farmers is important in gaining full access to the community and observing and generating data for analysis. There was also a recognition that in understanding formal smallholder collective action, identification of smallholder collective action projects is an important step and element of the research journey. Therefore, when I set out from the United Kingdom to Nigeria, I already knew the research community although I had never lived there. I had only visited the community as a child on few occasions. Therefore, it was important to establish links with the community in order to access my research participants and data sources.

Prior to my return to Nigeria for data collection, I had initially written to the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) explaining myself and my research and requesting attachment at the Ministry of Agriculture of the State during some part of my data

collection in the State. The SSG, responded in affirmation. The first step I took, when I returned to Nigeria and to Enugu State, was to make contact with the SSG who then introduced me to the State Ministry of Agriculture where I interacted with the commissioner for Agriculture.

Prior to my return to Nigeria for data collection, I was interacting with the SSG who had agreed that I will be accepted as an Intern within the Ministry of Agriculture. The terms of the internship were flexible and allowed me to focus on my data collection while supporting any of the projects as might be required. The nature of the agreed support included report writing, attending meetings and providing analytical briefs to the SSG, contributing to Governor's briefs and document review as might be required. The nature of the TOR allowed me to provide support to the Ministry in a flexible manner. Therefore, in some instances I would travel from Ugbawka to the state capital to attend meetings and get back. I write my reports from my base in the community in some instances.

The next important step during this phase of seeking access was the introduction to the different smallholder project managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. They included the Agricultural Development Project (ADP), the Commercial Agriculture Development Project (CADP), the SONGHAI Enugu Initiatives and the FADAMA project. The Commissioner introduced me to the Project Managers of the respective projects but also to the Head of Finance at the Ministry. The Head of Finance in this instance is also from Ugbawka. The Head of Finance then introduced me to another key community member who lived both in the city and travelled to the community frequently and also had a community shop where he sells groceries and other household items. He took me to the community and introduced me to other members of the community as research student and asked for their support on my behalf. He also assisted me in securing a house at his family house.

The next phase was my settling in phase. The first few days was difficult. I struggled to approach the smallholders directly and knowing where to go and who to approach despite his introduction to a few farmers. It was during this stage that I decided upon

a Research Assistant (RA) to aid in my navigation of the community to reach all the farmers and to bridge the familiarity gap between the farmers and I. I hired a young undergraduate student called Smart who was studying Biochemistry at a University. He is the grandson of my landlord who is also one of the oldest men in the community. His understanding of what research means was very good and proved to be very useful because he took the responsibility of initial interaction and in bridging the familiarity gap with the farmers. I also followed my guide and avoided misrepresentation.

The next step was the mapping of the community. Ugbawka is divided into two man quarters; Obinagu and Amafor with a total of eight villages namely Uhuona, Obeagu, Amankwo, Umuisu, Ishienu, Amagu, Amauzam and Isigwe villages (Mbah, 1997). With the support of the RA, I mapped out my data along these eight villages. It must be mentioned that these villages are connected without any visible boundary. Division into villages are mostly through previous ancestral locations.

The next phase was introduction to the gate keepers in the community, which included:

- the ward councillors;
- recognised church leaders such as Catholic Parish priest;
- recognised elders;
- leaders of community groups; and
- people of good will.

During one of such introductory meeting, one of the gatekeepers requested for a clear explanation of my mission in the community, which was an opportunity to explain clearly my research objectives, but also recognises participants right of expression and the representation of their knowledge of social world (Bergold and Thomas, 2012) Eventually some of the gatekeepers assisted in identifying other smallholders' as well as in providing some useful historical insight about the community (Bryman, 2012). As a practising Catholic, I identified the nearest Catholic Parish and established contacts with the local Parish Priest. I also met a Pastor of an Evangelical church and the councillors of the three wards in Ugbawka. One of the ward councillors introduced me

to other councillors. The mapping phase set the stage for identification of possible research participants across the eight villages between 4 to 8 possible target to be interviewed from each village.

I used different methods to integrate myself into the community, some of which include ordinary evening visits to the farmers, which was based on the advice of the research assistant that it is important to build relationships with the farmers prior to interviews to avoid the gathering of wrong data due to lack of trust. Trust is a crucial element of gaining access requires, which in turn requires talking to research targets and building rapport with them in order to be positioned to learn from them (Feldman et al., 2004, Russell, 2005).

Gradually, I became partially immersed into the village and started playing football in the evening with the boys. I also started hanging out in the evening after farm with the farmers in the local market, joining gradually in their conversation in Igbo language. This approach then allowed me to enter into the farmers' social world and realities. It also helped in forging bond between the community and I because gradually I was accepted and fully integrated into the community. My integration enhanced the quality of my relationship and interaction with the farmers and gave the farmers the confidence to share information about collective action with me. As a researcher, I was very careful and cautious about my positionality in order to avoid establishing close and empathetic relationships with the farmers (Taylor, 2011, Krieger, 1985) Coffey (1999, p. 47). Coffey (1999, p. 47) opines that

> *"relationships we create in the field raise our awareness of the ethnographic dichotomies of, for example, involvement versus detachment, stranger verses friend, distance verses intimacy … Friendships can help to clarify the inherent tensions of the fieldwork experience and sharpen our abilities for critical reflection …They do affect the ethnographer's gaze and it is important that that should be so".*

I had an agreement with the SSG that my internship will be part time and on need. Important also is that the internship aided my access to the Ministry of Agriculture where I interviewed the Commissioner as well as participated in workshops where I meet smallholder farmers that are part of the formal smallholder collective action projects managed by the Ministry. Therefore, the sequence of my data collection included time in the community and some other calculated time with the ministry. In managing my time between the community and my internship with the ministry, I spent most of the Monday with the ministry until June when my internship ended and the rest of the days of the week in the community until October 2010. In summary, the sequence of my research activities include the following:

- Meeting with the Secretary to the state Government on return to Nigeria
- Introduction with Key Personal at Ministry of Agriculture
- Meeting and initial introduction in Ugbawka
- Recruitment of Research Assistant
- Meeting with gate keepers
- Mapping of the community and identification of potential research participants (smallholders)
- Data collection – interview with smallholders, migrant labourers, market traders, milling centre mangers, Parish priest and middle merchants.
- Interview with participants at various workshops and seminars organised by Ministry of Agriculture under different projects

3.7 Data Collection Methods

3.7.1 Semi-Structured In-Depth Interview

In-depth interview was used interchangeably with other methods in this research for data collection. I adopted this method to allow flexibility and rich responses from the smallholder rice farmers. I went beyond direct yes and/or no responses to elicit rich responses by seeking clarification and elaboration and at the same time allowing the farmers to bring up any important point they deemed relevant. It gave the farmers the freedom to express themselves and take me through issues that otherwise would not have been possible under structured interviews. It also gave the farmers the space to

answer questions from within their own frame of reference and draw upon ideas and meaning which they are familiar with without necessarily using my own ideas and guideline. The meaning they attribute to events and how they relate to those events was captured from their point of view through their experiences.

The importance of using this approach lies in allowing the researcher to gather data from people from different socio- economic and cultural backgrounds (Bryman, 2012, Bryman, 1989). I was able to probe further into the different types of emphasis placed on different kinds of questions by each farmer. This was very important because allowing the farmers to speak their minds became a better way of discovering complex issues rather than checking for correctness of responses (Denscombe, 2007).

Although, I developed themes and issues that would guide me during the fieldwork, these themes were not static but are allowed to evolve as the data collection exercise unfolds. This is in line with the idea that most qualitative research evolves – it also hinges on the thinking that knowledge is situated and contextualised and that researchers are allowed the opportunity to ensure that all the issues are brought into context to ensure that situated knowledge is produced (Osei-Kufuor 2010). These interviews took place at their homes, in the market, during evening time in a bar or during face-to-face conversations (Bahora et al., 2009).

Using in-depth interviews allowed me to gain insight into the farmers' social relations and means by which they struggle for livelihood opportunities as well as the political contestations and negotiations that occur in the bid to either work collectively or individually. Actually, using in-depth interviews allowed me to go deeper into the minds of the farmers and to find the reason(s) behind their actions as members of broader group of rice farmers in the community. It also allowed me to probe why they would prefer to work collectively with other smallholder farmers and what circumstances would make them participate in such collective action. It was equally important to explore who wields what type and level of power among the smallholders

and whose action either sustains or militates against the survival of the farmers as a unit. Issues such as the attitude and motivation of individual farmers towards collective action was explored deeply using this approach. The research was designed in such a way so as to explore how farmers exercise their agency and participate in decision making processes – community members usually engage in interaction every evening at the village market and such informal gatherings provided me the platform to explore through their conversation and further deepen the interviews on social relations between smallholder rice farmers and how they engage with each other and for what reason. Conversations with the farmers also provided the platform for me to explore the various actors whose link with the external actors beyond the community impacts on smallholder collective action in the community. It was also an opportunity to understand better how rules apply in the governance of smallholder groups, but importantly to examine if there is consistency by particular or selected smallholders against such rules and why. Issues such as how the farmers access labour and the organisation and governance of farm labour sources is equally an important area which the in-depth interview helped in uncovering.

Another significant aspect of using in-depth interviews was the revelation of gendered collective action among women smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka. Interviews revealed that women are also attracted to collective action based on specific elements that favour them and other elements which are perceived as less attractive by men. It revealed the deep division of labour between men and women both as rice farmers and rice sellers. Equally useful from using this technique was the revelation of the different educational backgrounds of the farmers and its influence on smallholder collective action. In-depth interviews helped to reveal how different smallholder farmers use available institutional spaces and how power permeates those spaces as well as the dual interaction between formal and informal spaces where they exist.

3.7.2 Informal Focus Group Discussion

Beside the in-depth interview, I also used the informal focus group method. I choose the term informal focus group because it was not a planned workshop with stated

date, time or venue but I always knew it was going to happen. Also there is no moderator or facilitator. Discussions are open and fluid from one person to the other without facilitation like a planned focus group discussion. During evening sit-outs, I would always make my way to the village market square where farmers and other villages converge after farming. In some instances, I would begin a conversation with the group to elicit revelations into the village life in order to understand the interactions among the farmers, but also to gauge social relationships. This form of discussion provided useful insights on the new political dispensation and how it became an instrument of power through which some smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka access support from the State. Further insight on how the political dispensation created new powers in the community and how such powers challenged village level authority that have been in existence for hundreds of years were also revealed through the several informal focus group discussions.

Additionally, I employed a life history approach in interviewing some of the farmers and other members of the society especially those who are viewed as repository of knowledge and wisdom in the community; the elders. I used the life history approach mainly to trace historical evolution of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka and also to verify some of the important historical data regarding the community. Taking a life history approach, I interviewed three (3) selected members (elders) of the community.. Selection was based on the age of the men; from 85 and above. In addition, participants always make reference to these three men when they want to refer to any historical process or events. My interaction with these three elders was key in understanding for instance the evolution of smallholder collective action, historical family feuds, evolution of land use in Ugbawka, the changing pattern of village governance, role of women in the community and market and overall historical overview of Ugbawka. It also provided a historical view of power changes and how actor's responsibility changes overtime as a result of new changes in the political, social and economic arena within and beyond the community. These interview was important especially in view of the lack of written text about the community.

The table below presents the number and categories of people interviewed. The criteria for selection are discussed in the demographic section in chapter 5.

Table 2: Number and categories of participants interviewed

S/No	Category of institution/ organisation	Male	Female	Total
1.	Smallholder Rice Farmers	21	15	36
2.	Rice traders from the city	3	3	6
3.	Religious leaders	2	0	2
4.	Elders/ community leaders	3	0	3
5.	Migrant labourers	6	0	6
6.	Government Officials	2	0	2
7.	Development Project Officials	3	0	3
8.	Supervisors at rice milling centre	2	0	2
9.	NGO officials	1	1	2
10.	FADAMA Desk Officers	8	4	12
	Total	**51**	**23**	**74**

3.7.3 Observation

Observation was adopted based on the conviction that interaction and action of the social actor are crucial in understanding the micro-level interactions and politics of smallholder collective action. The ontological perspective for this research is to see the action, behaviour and interaction of social actors as a central element (Mason, 2002, p. 85). Observation entails looking and listening very carefully with the aim of discovering particular information, behaviour and action of social actors (Langley,

1988). My observational technique involved using both participation and non-participant approach. In some cases, I sat during interactions amongst different smallholders, but also participated in such interaction in some cases. In the latter case, I had the opportunity to elicit discussion towards the research and I recorded information on my note book as soon as I return to my house. I also observed activities and events as they occurred in the farms, market and in the village square. My observation and participation transformed and enriched my data because rather than assuming a passive role, I took up roles and participated in functional activity in order to uncover the reality (Yin, 2003, pp. 93-4). Atkinson (2001) highlighted that ethnographic research is embedded on first-hand experience and the exploration of particular setting. It helps researcher to focus on observing those tiny pieces of information and actions by social actors through the immersion of oneself in the day-to-day life of the social actors (May, 2001, p. 148). Mason (2002) reckoned that observation allows the researcher to gather multidimensional data on social interaction in specific context as they occur rather than relying on retrospective account of events.

Through observation, I was able to gather data from different community settings, social spaces and directly from the actions of the smallholder farmers. It provided an environment of natural setting that allowed me to observe how smallholders related with each other in different places and contexts. It also enabled me to experience how meanings are conceived and interpreted and to gain insight on how social relations, cultural norms, and economic factors shaped smallholder farmer associations and participation in collective action. I was also able to identify different blocks and groupings within the smallholders. Through observation and in-depth interviews, I gathered information regarding the migrant labourers and how they influenced and controlled labour power in the research context.

I observed smallholder farmers' activities in their farms, the markets, village square, milling centres and other social settings including village sit-outs and restaurants. According to Creswell (2009, p. 178), good qualitative research should select

purposefully participants and sites that would help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. I also observed negotiation for labour between the farmers and the migrant labourers, interpersonal relationships between farmers and how their interactions related to the wider relationships for smallholder collective action in the community.

Observation in the market enabled me to understand market power dynamics, gender differentiations, level of cooperation and interaction between the rice farmers/sellers and how power spaces are negotiated and exploited. I took notes on rules, norms and practices that shape negotiation. I also observed negotiations, contestation on the one hand and agreement and disagreement on other hand at the farms and markets. I also observed an event that involved the State government distributing fertilizers and hybrid rice seeds in the research community. These observations enabled me to establish who belongs to which group and who wielded what power. It also helped me to discover the influence of political capital in collective action and how different farmers attempt to establish link with external political actors.

My observation in some instances revealed deep mistrust and struggles rather than organised collective action. The motivation for collective action varied from one farmer to the other and depended on interlinked factors that can be interpreted differently into social, economic and political factors. Issues that were of interest to the research were noted down and followed up through interviews and conversation. Much importance was placed on how smallholder collective action functions amongst the farmers but also on the interplay between politics and power between smallholder farmers in effort to gain advantage over one another and as the main obstacles that inhibit farmers from working collectively.

During my evening visits, I observed and listened to interactions between the farmers and the migrant labourers and how individual farmers attempted to influence the decisions of the labourers. What was fascinating was the way the labourers turned farmers' politics into an advantage to control the labour and allocation of labour time

to different farmers. I also observed how inputs from the government were shared and the individual farmers that participated in the sharing. I routinely took field notes, which I later used as a basis for follow-up in-depth interviews in order to broaden the understanding why certain farmers participated, while others had no knowledge of such support. I also observed gender participation in the distribution and sharing of inputs and thereafter explored further what qualified certain women to participate in the sharing and distribution meetings.

3.7.4 Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources on the subject are very sparse and the meagre data on secondary sources covered most history of the communities and social life. There are a few secondary data sources on agriculture and smallholding, which I sourced from Enugu State Government Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and the Commercial Agriculture Development Project (CADP). Secondary data comprises both published and unpublished documents such as ADP reports and published book on Ugbawka. Secondary data that dealt specifically on smallholder collective action in the community were non-existent and I relied more on secondary data that broadly covered agriculture and to some extent on smallholder collective action. As most of the secondary data dealt with community life including the social organisation of the farmers, I did not rely much on secondary data sources to respond to the research questions.

3.8 Type of Data Generated

This research benefited from various types of data, which I generated from the field research and secondary sources.

i. The first type of data, which I generated, came from ethnographic observation within the community settings; the farm, market, village social interactions, farmers' social evening groups, personal visits to the farmers and places where labour negotiation occurred.

ii. The second type of data came from field notes, transcript of in-depth interviews, video and tape recordings and informal discussions. I will discuss in the next section, how the data generated was recorded and analysed.

3.9 Data Recording and Analysis

Analysing the data generated for this thesis was very complex, difficult and tedious. It took a lot of time with constant movement between the data and its analysis. Bearing in mind that the research methodology is ethnography, data analysis started while I was in the field with the first set of conversations, interviews and notes from observation. Data analysis was thus an on-going process that started from the early stage of data generation till the end (Glaser, 1978). Field notes, observed trends and recorded in-depth interviews were integrated together in order to develop themes, concepts and categories. The concepts developed were checked with the research question to ensure focused data generation and I was constantly comparing data with the concepts and themes as I move further and deeper into data gathering (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). At the end of each day, I listened to data collected through in-depth interviews which I digitally recorded and also compared the interview data with the notes from informal focus groups and from field observation. It helped me to reflect on what part of the interviews and which respondents needed further follow-up interviews. It was also through such reflection that I was able to plan subsequent visits and/or which farmers would be interviewed further. Listening through daily interviews helped me to develop next lead for data collection.

Data collected were then integrated into the analysis and I was able to compare data with patterns and themes and also compare them with research question and objectives as they emerge. In most cases, this allowed me to refine my strategies. I developed key words, themes, categories and relationships in order to correctly align data to correspond to correct set of variables and patterns. I also constantly engaged in data check and comparison between what I observed and what I was told during

the in-depth interviews or during focus group to avoid pursuing wrong patterns (Mason, 2002). In analysis of the data, I followed the following steps:

3.9.1 Data Transcription

The first important step was to listen to all the interviews recorded in Igbo language and transcribed them to English language. It was time consuming and took minimum of two working days 8 -5 to transcribe one interview completely. Data transcription was important but equally tested my positionality as a researcher. I ensured that I transcribed exactly what they farmers said and I used my positionality as someone who speaks the same language to capture expressions which could not be translated literally.

3.9.2 Comparing Transcribed Data with Field Notes

After transcription, I compared the transcribed data with field notes and comments. I had two kinds of notes. The first is the notes from field observation and the second is the notes from informal focus group discussion. Some notes were made in short hand and so, I had to compare data sets from interview, observation and informal focus groups and three life histories with each other. This is the process of constant comparison, by initially comparing data set to data set from different data collection methods and then by comparing and checking the data set to theory. This also involves matching and selecting related data.

3.9.3 Using the Data Set to Code into Themes and Categories

I used open coding process whereby I will pay attention to one key idea and review the data set and match the idea around the data set. Points that were regarded as important to the research were cross checked across different data sets and noted down to form an identifier. This was done throughout all the interviews and crosschecked with field notes and other narratives. Thereafter ideas with common theme were grouped together. Ideas with commonalities then emerged and were further categorized. The commonalities then begin to form the concepts and with

constant comparison and interaction different categories of concepts then begins to emerge. I went through the dataset to ensure that issues were grouped correctly in themes and categories as well as patterns and research questions.
This was done manually without the use of any computer aided data analysis software such as Nudist or Nvivo software. My decision was to ensure that no data was lost in transition while using computer-generated answers. The data generated from the field was also bulky, rich and embedded with powerful narratives from the respondents. the careful steps taken ensured that data was not lost.

Using non-computer based manual data analysis helped me to meticulously discern the different layers of meaning from emerging data. As I mentioned earlier in the previous paragraph, during data generation, I used field notes in which themes and concepts coming out from the data were categorized into different groups as a guide to grouping the data. In the end, the grouping and categorization resulted in bulky and messy data that needed thorough and meticulous organisation.

3.10 Reflectivity and Positionality

The role of the researcher in constructing meanings in the research process has gained some degree of acceptability especially in qualitative research (Neuman, 2006). Recognition of this agency by the researcher as well as of the influences, biases and impossibilities of the researcher approaching the research from the point of view of a blank slate without preconceived ideas is called reflectivity (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999).There is a tendency for researcher's position and background to influence the research process and outcome and how the researcher interacts with participants. In some cases, the angle of the investigation, the method used, the findings considered as appropriate and the way in which the research is framed might be influenced by the researcher's background and the need to satisfy different audiences requires that a decision must be made on how to present the research data. Although, I recognise that this research might interest policy makers, I nonetheless write for academic audience.

The importance of reflectivity is that it limits personal biases of the researcher and enables actions to be understood within its own particular context while explaining the link between the researcher and the research participants (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, May, 1998, Garfinkel, 1984). Most importantly is that it helps for better understanding of the ontological structure of the participants rather than imposing those from an already dominant culture (Worsley, 1997).

Following my decision to use Ugbawka as my case study, I began to reflect deeply on my experiences in Nigeria; growing up in Enugu and working with ActionAid where I was involved in a smallholder project. Specifically, I asked myself the following questions:

1. What role would my positionality as a student outside of Nigeria play in my interaction with the smallholder?
2. What role would my positionality as Igbo and indigene of neighbouring community play in my interaction with the smallholders?
3. How should I use this two different positions of mine – what space exist for their usage and how to I ensure balance?
4. How would I ensure that I remain neutral and guided by the research objective?

The nature of qualitative research practically sets the researcher as the data collection instrument and as a human being who is researching on social issues, it is expected that my belief political stance, cultural background are important variables that may affect the research process. In social research, the participants' social context is important but that is also the same of the researcher. In my case, I was constantly aware of my position as a young educated person from Enugu state and how my education has shaped my understanding of the local realities and I was conscious of the educational gap between the farmers and I. I was conscious of building trust with the farmers and also that conducting a study on issues that touch on the daily lives of the farmers could be touchy. I viewed my position as both an insider and outsider and was aware of the danger of revealing my own biases. I also

accepted that, until trust is established (even after in some instances) that I could still be subjected to an outsider position especially when farmers with strong political capital are discussing confidential plans on allocation of input or gaining of access.

The understanding of self as the researcher instrument as a researcher means that the researcher accepts the possibility and responsibility of his or her subjective biases interfering with the research including the reporting of the findings. There are two important issues in interpretation. First is the way the researcher accounts for the experiences of the subjects on the one hand and his/her experience on the other hand and second the way in which the participants make meaning of their experiences. Within this frame, voice is crucial in reporting the finding - through voice that the researcher imprints his/her signature onto the research. It is essential that researcher ensure that experiences of the participants are carefully captured through their particulars (Eisner, 1991).

There is no expression without positionality (Bourke, 2014) and positionality is crucial for voice and expression in qualitative research and represents the space where objectivity and subjectivity meet (Hall, 1990, Bourke, 2014). Objectivity and subjectivity exist in dialectic relationships and to say that one achieved pure objectivity in social and qualitative research is naïve because we can never devoid ourselves of subjectivity. As researchers, we must strive to remain objective but always mindful of our subjectivity – accept who we are as social beings and member of a group in different social positions. Such is positionality.

As a researcher who is from a nearby community but lives and studies in the United Kingdom, what does it means to interact with the smallholders whose view of you is as an outsider and those who regarded me as a member of the same society. First of all, I have to be careful not speak for the farmers especially those that view me as an outsider. Such effort will reinforce their view and severe any existing trust built. I have to allow them to express themselves and ensure that, I depose myself of any power

during our interaction. I have to show them that my role is to allow their experience and voice to be captured and properly represented and presented in the finding.

As I prepared to collect data through interviews, observation and other informal focus group discussion, I accepted that I could be judged based on the four indicated lenses. My position as an outsider in a sense helped me and became reversed through data collection. My conscious effort to built trust and to listen carefully created space for expression of voice in all counts. For those farmers who either believe I am an agent of the state, to those who believe that I am a young man from a nearby community, to those women who were excited to speak and to those, who never discussed their experience as smallholder farmers and their daily life etc. Therefore, by recognising my positionality, I ended up creating space to the different groups of farmers to be heard.

Equally, by recognising my positionality, based on language connection, I was also able to follow their expression and reactions and to understand when I was expected to respond and empathise. My positionality as an Igbo person who understand the culture was used to positive effect. It also allowed me to understand when to give space and retreat and when to continue a particular line of engagement. Language was important in building trust and bridging the insider/outside gap. I know when to draw on particular cultural value. For instance, I know that I cannot refuse food when offered and I must say good morning, good afternoon or good evening as the case maybe whenever I walk past elders or people senior to me in age else I will be qualified as an uncultured young man, which could affect my reputation and my relationship with the farmers.

The issue of positionality remained throughout the data collection exercise. I never lost focus or relaxed on my role as a researcher. I was always aware of the different perceptions about me. One particular farmer did ask me one evening during an informal group discussion about governance and politics, which party, I belong to (you must belong to one party or you must support one party). That sudden question called

my positionality into the open and the others were keen to know which side of the political divide I support. I was here to ask the question and not the other way round. I responded by confirming that I had left for studies since 2007 and that before my studies I was working in NGO and not for any government. I was trying to build a line of conversation that would confirm to them that I am not a member of any political party and neither do I share any affinity for any. Then one of the men said to the other, "*remember he told us that he is here because of his studies and not for government"* and I said yes, that I am here because of my studies then touched on our initial introductory meetings where I explained my research objective to them. Perhaps, the man who raised the question was still not convinced that I was a student (I showed my student ID during the introductory meetings) but tried to ascertain again by throwing the question at me all of a sudden. But the intervention from the second man also proved that, trust has been established to a certain extent because he statement was echoed by other four men sitting with us that evening. It also made me very aware of my position as a citizen and indigene of the State. Henceforth, I avoided politically sensitive discussions in order to keep my political neutrality.

My reflection and positionality definitely played some part in the way I approached the data collection. For instance, having worked with an international NGO in Nigeria and also with smallholder farmers in the past, I was aware of my personal bias in favour of the smallholders. I am familiar with the neglect of smallholder farmers by the government including the diversion of input by middle agents and politicians for personal gains. Being aware of my positionality and reflecting on them allowed subjectivity to meet objectivity in data analysis. I constantly ensured that some key responses from farmers especially with regards to external actors, NGOs and government are verified and that follow up interview was done to ascertain the authenticity of the data.

Finally, not only was the outcome and product of this research mediated through my positionality, the participation of the farmers as research participants was also mediated through my positionality. However, what is certain is that the way I mediated

between my positionality and the research created space for farmers of different inclinations to find their voices and share their experiences. In fact, the data collection exercise was a learning curve for me as a researcher.

3. 11 Ethics and Validity

This section reflects on some of the ethical dilemmas involved in undertaking this research. Prior to my fieldwork, I designed a consent form that stated the research rationale and choice of case study. The consent form was approved. However, on getting to the community, I adapted the content of the consent form to fit into local context. I knew that most of the farmers would not be comfortable reading and signing the consent form. So, before I embarked on any interview or observation, I sought the consent of the farmers concerned and ensured that they understood what I was going to do. I also ensured that I pre-informed the respondents before visiting their homes and ensured that I was welcomed before I conducted any interview. All respondents gave their consent before the interview and I also informed them of their rights to opt out at any period or stage of the research process.

Similarly, I made it clear to the farmers that they could choose to remain anonymous and some of the farmers also sought confidentiality, which I granted and ensured. Anonymity and confidentiality were very important to some of the farmers in order to reveal some vital information. Confidentiality was vital for them especially in discussion of their family life, relationships & social tiers. Consent was always sought from the farmers before any recording or photos were taken. I also ensured that I informed them about my intention to write down some of the key points before the start of any interview. All my respondents gave their consent for the use of the audio recorder in private interviews with them, although in some instances some farmers requested anonymity.

One of the critiques of qualitative ethnographic approach to data collection is the absence of standard means of ensuring data reliability and validity (Robson, 2002, p. 168). In this research, I adopted the argument of Lincoln and Guba (1985.,) and

Mason (2002) that qualitative research is neither passive nor neutral but interactive, creative, selective and interpretative. Although there are concerns regarding generalisation of flexible ethnographic research, it nevertheless allowed me deeper insight into the contextual specificities of the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the farmers. While the argument on the generalizable tendency of micro level ethnography appears genuine, contextual and detailed micro research and analysis is certainly an opportunity to examine how local dynamics drive broader trends (Osei-Kufuor, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that credibility, transferability, dependability and *confirmability* should be the focus of flexible research rather than scientific validity based on generalisation. This is to say that researchers should focus on the atypical and the unusual in order to contribute to knowledge.

This research was more about investigating the micro level and contextual interaction in collective action amongst smallholder rice farmers. It is a way of contributing to the larger picture on the theory of collective action and particularly on the new thinking around smallholder collective action and market. This study could certainly add to the body of knowledge beyond the case study. It is important to note that concerns over generalisation of flexible research beyond and above similar settings and context reduces policy making into a guess and probabilistic endeavour. Findings from this research limit generalisation to contexts dissimilar to that of smallholder farmers in Ugbawka. The objective of this research was not to generalise but rather to contextualise on smallholder farmers' social relations at the micro level and how they (smallholders) function as a collective.

3.12 Conclusion

The previous chapter focused on the limitations and assumption made in the conceptualisation of collective action, this chapter shifted the attention to the philosophical underpinnings of this research and beyond the research question guiding this research. It provided an overview of the ontological and epistemological foundation of this research anchored on the Critical Realist philosophy, which recognises that social structures are real on a deep level and can be understood

through the empirical level (Toner, 2008). The research took an actor-oriented approach to epistemology that views social actors as knowledgeable and capable of constructing their own meaning. Actors are thus research subjects not objects and contribute to the shaping and constructing of meanings to the research. The study also adopted multiple methods of data generation in order to gather individual farmers' experiences of collective action functioning. In-depth interview and observation were employed in generating data. Data analysis was done manually without computer based software and used to answer the research questions.

Chapter Four:

4.0 Smallholder Collective Action and Rice Farming in Nigeria

4.1 Introduction

Smallholder farmers have continuously remained the backbone of Nigerian agriculture throughout history (Awotide et al., 2015). From the pre-colonial era to the post-colonial period, smallholder farmers have always adapted to the changing agricultural landscape of Nigeria through various measures but predominantly through collective action. This chapter deals with the historical development of smallholder collective action in Nigeria by concentrating on the historical contradictions that have worked and continue to work against smallholder rice farmers. Specifically, it examines the distortive effects of historical processes and developments on the established way of life of the farmers. I highlight the historical development of smallholder collective action in Nigeria in a way that effectively exposes the complex mix of movement through the ages to their present situation.

The first part of this chapter examines the practice of collective action in Ugbawka in an Igbo community. It provides an understanding of how historical events interfered and subsequently distorted the community's way of life in Ugbawka resulting in a mixture of collective action practices. The second part of this chapter examines how the distortive nature of Nigerian agricultural policies on collective action hindered the development of smallholder rice farmers in Nigeria. Nevertheless, it highlights the adaptive nature of Nigerian smallholders by shedding light on their survival through different policies trajectories despite challenges and market obstacles.

4.2 The Igbos and Collective Action: The Pre-Colonial Context

Conventional thinking is that Western influence has "emancipated" Africa. Europeans often justify colonialization on the grounds that it was a moral duty to "uplift" Africans from their primitive state (Khapoya, 2010). However, ample evidence suggests that colonialism was a distortive influence that not only robbed Africans of their cultural development but moreover undermined their progress as a people (Rodney, 1981).

The Igbos occupy the South East Nigeria population of over forty million people (Ekwe-Ekwe, 2006). Prior to the British's annexation of Nigeria, collective action in the Igbo traditional system was culturally embedded and rooted in community practices (Ijere, 1992). The Igbo way of life was very communitarian in nature and is closely linked to both the political and social systems that define the Igbo society. For instance, land ownership during this period was predominantly based on customary law rooted in communal ownership but also structured in a way that individuals are not denied security of tenure. This practice of communal ownership of land, entitlements and security of tenure typifies the Igbo nation (Jones, 1949, p. 313), There was great sense of collectiveness, and the society and the wealth around it were regarded as belonging to everyone. It also promoted a culture of respect and sharing as a way of preserving and maintaining equity in the community (Onyeiwu, 1997).

The culture of collectivism indirectly enforces the culture of collective action and cooperation in farming, and provides smallholders the opportunity to access skills, tools and services from one another. Collective action among smallholder farmers during this period cuts across the different stages of farming; in land preparations, cultivation, post-cultivation activities like weeding and harvesting. Collective action during the precolonial period provided space for labour reciprocity in smallholder farming, which is based on trust, collective support, non-material rewards for cooperation and amicable resolution of conflicts. According to Onyeiwu (1997, pp. 409-10)

> *For generation[s], the Igbo cooperated in many aspects of their economic and social activities in ways that defied standard neoclassical assumptions of self-interest and utility maximization. For expositional convenience, cooperative behaviour among the peasant Igbo can be classified as follows: labour reciprocity, trust, support for the unfortunate, non-material reward for cooperative behaviour, and amicable resolution of conflicts (pp. 409-410).*

Labour reciprocity as a form of smallholder collective action provides a platform that allows the individual famers to benefit from collective support, but also to give back to the group in a mutual circle of reciprocity. Wage labour was an exception rather than the rule because farm labour was based on reciprocity. Through the associated community life, sources of labour come from large networks of relatives, extended family, kinship as well as age grades. According to Onyeiwu (1997), the labour supply was purely voluntary and there were no sanctions applied. Even though there were no sanctions, the spirit of collective action based on reciprocity ensured that the circle of labour exchange is completed amongst the members of the group. This medium created an informal framework through which smallholder farmers achieved their goals of collective action informally (McCarthy et al., 2004). Smallholder collective action in the Igbo pre-colonial period through labour reciprocity exemplified a unified political and cultural alternative to wage labour through a mutually reinforcing framework based on self to community and community to self.

Trust was another important elements of smallholders' collective action. Labourers volunteer with utmost commitment and expect that the farmers would fulfil their commitment based on the socio-cultural practices without any prior agreed contract (Onyeiwu, 1997). Trust between the labourers and farmers draws significantly from the Igbo belief in Ofor which is the belief in the supremacy of God and the acknowledgement that one is inclined to succeed by embracing three fundamental principles of freedom, obligations, and tolerance (Ibid). This tendency also eschews aggressiveness in acquisition and less interest in individual materialism. The Igbo community believes that cooperation and collectiveness strengthens the community but also that human deeds are recorded and monitored by the Supreme power Njaka (1974, p. 29). In Igbo, the term Ofor is used to refer to uprightness and cooperation with communal spirits.

Ofor in Igbo land has an important social status attached to it and is represented by a symbolic tree- Detarium elastic. Ofor is very revered in Igbo land and it is to the Igbos

that Sycamore in ancient Egypt was sacred to "Osiris (Jeffreys, 1956). *Ofor* is a symbolic instrument for engendering social cohesion among the pre-colonial Igbo traditional societies. Its' mediating effects and significance stems from the fact that the society's social values are intertwined and in fact founded upon its belief systems. Whereby the *Ofor* symbolises, characterises and exemplifies all the desirable values such as honesty, forthrightness, harmony etc., which are also values extolled in the traditional Igbo religious belief systems, its' significance forms the guiding standard of behavioural conducts within the society in which trust is built. For the purpose of clearer comparative analysis, *Ofor* was/is to the traditional Igbo society what the Bible and/or Qur'an is to true Christians and Moslems.

Aside from its religious or belief-oriented significance, *Ofor* went beyond to become the symbol of pre-modern tort law in the society. The social standards/expectations placed by *Ofor* on the members of the society could be summarised by borrowing from the famous quote of Lord Atkin in the seminal tort case of Donoghue v Stevenson (1932) that "*You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour*"[9].

What then is the mode of enforcement of those *Ofor* standards/expectations? As explained earlier, the symbolisms and significance of *Ofor* is embedded in the peoples' belief system. An infringement of the *Ofor* standards hardly ever occurs. When it does, the punishment is both comprehensive and overarching (having social, religious and spiritual consequences). An infringement of an *Ofor* value or standard triggers a punishment that could be likened to *Latae Sententiae (ie* according to the code of the Catholic canon law, a *latae sententiae* is a penalty that follows *ipso facto* or automatically by the force of the law itself when contravened). In other words, there does not need to be any formal pronouncement of punishments or its terms. As the

[9] This case established the modern law of negligence and established the neighbour test. Lord Atkin asserted that "The rule that you are to love your neighbour becomes in law you must not injure your neighbour; and the lawyer's question" Who is my neighbour?" receives a restricted reply. You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions, which you can reasonably foresee, would be likely to injure your neighbour. Who then in law is my neighbour? The answer seems to be persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act that I ought reasonably to have them in contemplation as being so affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question."

values and standards are embedded in the peoples' subconscious minds, so are the penalties for flouting them.

Among the Igbos, Ofor brings respect to the holder, and bestows what the Igbos refer to as "*ugwu". "Ugwu"* also refers to the right or worthiness of goodwill that inheres in an individual or a group (Afigbo, 1982, p. 18). Therefore, one of the civic advancements in Igbo land is striving to be revered as "*Oji Ofor,"* which literally means 'Ofor titleholder' as it comes with responsibility on the one hand and communal trust on the other hand. A holder can participate in decision-making processes in the community and also represents the community within and outside the community. The centrality of Ofor is that it underpins the instrument of trust within a community. Therefore, an Ofor holder is comparable to the modern day English knights.

The third component is communal living, which equally defines the pre-colonial Igbo society. It is reflected in the way smallholders organise themselves collectively to achieve common goals. Farmers constantly assisted each other in various farming activities and in other activities like fencing and repairing of leaking rooftop. These practices were not formally entrenched with rules and regulations but were engraved in the cultural practices of the Igbos. It is also associated with the thinking among Igbo of pre-colonial Nigeria that leadership should be based on community service. This community-sense is also linked to reciprocity and trust as part of the broader elements that ensure the functioning and realisation of communal living. According to Hardin (2001), collective trust and reciprocal norms directly impact on a sense of responsibility and character to the individual actors as well as to the group – truth binds, bonds and ensures that groups respect is ensured and that responsibility and obligation are derived and not forced.

Thus, for the smallholders, collective action signifies a way of life, and embodies a way of community-living. Their culture is predicated on self-regulation to common interest. The farmers derive their freedom and strength from the community to which

they owe allegiance (Njaka, 1974, p. 56). Hence, collective action among smallholder farmers in Igbos of the pre-colonial Nigeria was socio-culturally motivated and rooted in the day-to-day way of life of the people. Uchendu (1965, p. 33) summarises the cooperative and collectiveness of the Igbo thus:

> *Igbo individualism is not "rugged" individualism; it is individualism rooted in-group solidarity. There is a great emphasis on communal cooperation and achievement. The idea of cooperation, illustrated in work groups, credit associations, and title-making societies, pervades all aspects of Igbo culture*

One of the classical examples of smallholder collective action that cut across the various Nigerian societies and exemplified collectivism based on trust during the pre-colonial period is the Isusu or Osusu (Igbo), Esusu (Yoruba) and Adashi (Hausa). Isusu is an informal financial saving system based on groups that started in Nigeria in the 16th century. Isusu adopts a rotational saving and credit system whereby members contribute to the general savings for the benefit of all members on a rotational basis. This system was strongly embedded in the principle of trust and reciprocity without any form of formal agreement[10] and was eventually exported to the Caribbean during slave trade as a community financial credit system (Bascom, 1952, Seibel, 2007). It originated from rotational labour based on reciprocity and extended to financial contribution based on trust and reciprocity. Isusu continued to adapt and to advance from the pre-currency period to the modern period when cowries, pounds and later Naira became legal tenders. Ijere (1992) highlighted that it embodies those aspects that deal with people's way of life in the community – mode of behaviour, attitude to life, relationship with others and customs. It promotes honesty, fairness, equity, democracy and mutual empathy (Nwachukwu, 2015) According to Ofuoku et al. (2009) neither socialism nor capitalism, nor mixed economy espouses and

[10] For instance, the savings are not kept in the bank during the pre-colonial period but kept by one member who presents the savings when required and was in-charge of advancing credit to members of rotational basis.

enshrines these virtues and standards better than the Nigerian “Isusu” system with an effective and efficient self-repayment system (Ofuoku and Urang, 2012).

The pre-colonial system in Ugbawka as part of Igbo society existed with a high sense of collective action that cut across various aspects of community life. Smallholder farmers as part of the large community tapped and benefited from this form of collective action and formed various forms of collective action initiatives amongst which was the Isusu system. Brautigam (1997) pointed out that the Igbos are successful in substituting for the state and can resort to a range of cultural and historical features that enable them to create stateless and informal organisations through which they build strong achievement orientation and community based networks to support each other. Meagher (2010) argues that the strength of the Igbos lies in the constellation of independent communities that depends on the smallest and closest unit of the community through collective action and cooperation to build sustainable networks. Despite its reliance on close-knit associations and ties, they are capable of drawing on inter-regional long distance associations and networks that often emanate from and link to community networks, and also relied upon links developed with different communities. Smallholders during this period relied on these networks and linkages through collective action for trade and commercialisation of their farm produce. The smallholder collective action systems in Igbo land during the pre-colonial period provided the foundation for the survival of colonial agricultural policies and systems, which was reliant on the smallholder but also destroyed an already existing and functional system of collective action.

4.3 Smallholder Collective Action and Colonial Contradictions

The usurpation of smallholder powers by the colonial government and the coercion towards formal cooperatives and unions was one of the key challenges to smallholder collective action during the colonial period. According to Helleiner (1996), the colonial administration exploited the existing structure of smallholder collective action for purchasing their agricultural outputs for export. This section thus examines the

contradictions that came with the colonial systems and its effect on the existing forms of smallholder collective action in Igbo societies.

Reforms in agriculture during the colonial period began with the Nigerian land policy, which was conceived by the colonialist as a way of exerting control over agricultural produce and ensuring minimal British investment in Nigerian agriculture. This colonial agenda was predicated on retaining the smallholder form of agriculture and to rely on smallholders' ability to collectively organise and produce (Buchanan and Pugh, 1995). In his statement, the former Consul of the Southern Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, asserted that peasants and peasants' way of farming would serve British interest more as despite upheavals, African peasants would remain in their farms and would guarantee the supply of agricultural produce required for the home industries whilst plantation farmers would flee the farms during crisis (Batten, 1949).

In Clifford's view, smallholders were comparably cheaper than plantation farmers especially in terms of sustainability of supply, suitability to natural conditions and the systems of labour. It also guarantees access to large number of farmers through a single entry point. Although Clifford presents a valid argument regarding the advantage of smallholder farming, the motive for continuing to use the smallholder method however offers a critique of his view when he affirmed that Britain is a manufacturing country and it is in the interest of Britain to sustain any means of production which ensures steady supply of produce in ever increasing quantities of the highest quality. He reiterates that "*it is important that Nigeria should be able to produce and not only Nigeria but other colonies the maximum of raw materials"* as cited in (Ijere, 1974, pp. 298-9). To achieve this objective of creating a money economy, the burden was placed squarely on the smallholders through their system of collective action. The colonialists sought to achieve this by creating various systems and platforms that aim to formalise smallholder collective action as well as exert control of the smallholder production system and output including the use of, creation of formal cooperative and Union, the introduction of an indirect rule system of administration through warrant chief in Igbo land.

4.3.1 The Disruptive Effect of Warrant Chief System

One of the colonial initiatives that contradicted the collective action system in the pre-colonial Igbo land and Ugbawka was the creation of a warrant chief system. The warrant chief system was created by the colonial administration as a substitute to the republican and acephalous organisation of the Igbo precolonial system that survived on collective action based on trust and reciprocity. This system disrupted the collective action in Ugbawka and the entire Igbo society in two major ways.

First, the system transferred power away from the community to individuals and therewith altered an existing functional system of collective action and community Authority and recognition were given to certain individuals, who consequently became chiefs and usurped power for themselves and the colonial lords. They were the judges, tax collectors, and providers of conscripted labour (for colonial exploitation) for their respective areas, and generally served as the keepers for the colonial regime (Nwaubani, 1994).They wielded overwhelming power and reported only to the British colonial officer. In effect, individuals became more powerful than the community they were meant to serve. The chiefs demanded forced loyalty through different means including coercion, intimidation and exploitation. Consequently, the collective essence of the community was altered (Afigbo, 1982). According to Nwaubani (1994), the chiefs became rulers who, with British backing, carried themselves with self-centred assuredness and panache- substituting community self of collective action with individualism.

The second effect of the colonial institutionalisation of warrant chiefs in an otherwise republican and functional acephalous system based on collective action was the impact it had on the trust that existed in the different communities in Igbo land. As highlighted in the section on its precolonial system, trust was an essential part of the Igbo community and has shaped the way people, including farmers, interacted and organised themselves. The value attached in the Ofor system was one of the ways through which communities preserve the trust system inherent in Igbo communities. However, with the creation of the warrant chiefs and the preponderance of power

bestowed on them by the colonial administrators, trust gave way to individualism. The sphere of influence of the Chief cutting across executive, judicial and political power created an upwards accountability system away from the community to the chiefs. Through a new system based on loyalty and exploitation, communities gradually began moving away from a system of collective action towards individualism due to fear of colonial repression.

Through their power based on intimation and exploitation, the warrant chiefs were used to great effect by the colonial administration in the management of smallholder farmers. They became a vehicle for the implementation of colonial agricultural policies on smallholder farmers and ensured that agricultural produce from the farmers were assembled and transferred onwards to export. One of those policies which the warrant chiefs helped to institutionalise in Igbo land was the farm cooperative system.

4.3.2 The Cooperative Approach to Smallholder Collective Action in Nigeria

One of the official agricultural policies of the colonial administration in Nigeria was to retain the smallholder system of farming. The administration opted against the large scale farming system in favour of smallholder farming. The administration's view was to rely on the smallholders' ability to collectively organise and produce. Moreover, it was assumed that it will serve the British interest better in the face of socio-political upheaval (Buchanan and Pugh, 1955, Batten, 1949).

In 1935, a study was commissioned to examine the prospect of collective action using cooperatives. This study was led by Mr C.F Strickland who also recommended that smallholder collective should formalised through cooperative in order to ensure control of the farmers as well as to ensure a steady supply of the farm produce (Agbo and Chidebelu, 2010). Therefore, smallholder collective action in the form of cooperatives and farmers' union was also created to ensure quantitative and qualitative supply of farm produce for onward export to British industries. The acceptance of the report thus marked the origin of formal smallholder collective action in Nigeria (Agbo and Chidebelu, 2010).

The decision to create formal farmers' cooperatives was in line with the British policy aimed at finding a sustainable means of farm supply for export. This was an attempt to facilitate the movement of rural farm produce from hinterlands to the coast for export and to ensure a coordinated approach of collective supply of smallholder produce in a coordinated manner and through a controlled channel. As a result, the colonial government created an Agricultural Commodity Marketing Board based on Strickland's report primarily for marketing exportable agricultural commodities produced in Nigeria on behalf of the smallholders' producers, albeit without their full consent and on negligible rate (Ojowu and Mensah, 1988). Ekpere (1980) argued that the formation of the new cooperative based on Strickland's report did not take a new form but emanated from existing clusters of farmer groups in the different regions of the country purposely for the growing of major cash crops such as cocoa, cotton, and palm produce for colonial export. This was easier for the colonialists because the different existing forms of collective action were efficient and functional with deep ties in the communities from where the derive them.

To exert full control, colonial administrators created a centralised control, and established monopoly marketing of smallholder agricultural products in Nigeria. This was done with the introduction of colonial commodity boards in 1947 which centralised commodity export (Williams, 1985). The policy also ensured that the board controlled value chain processes including setting the prices as well as the return to smallholders, which were well below world prices (Abdu and Marshall, 1990). This was justified as a way of minimising the price fluctuation in the world commodity market (Hinderink and Sterkenburg, 1983). Meanwhile, the surplus accumulated were invested in Britain and not in Nigeria (Williams, 1985).

Furthering the objective of controlling the smallholder products, the colonial administration in 1954 created a federal structure with three (later four) powerful and largely autonomous regions with the objective of decentralising the control of smallholder collective action through cooperatives (Watts, 1983). Ojowu and Mensah (1988, p. 248) opined that decentralising the structure into regions and the creation of

regional marketing boards were aimed at strengthening the power and control over smallholders and to speed up the process of product supply for export by the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company (NPMC).

The impact of colonial policy was felt in Ugbawka like in many other Igbo communities. As a transit community for farm produce from parts of the Eastern Nigeria, Ugbawka witnessed first-hand the disruptive influence of the colonial policies on the smallholder farmers and the community at large. The colonial cooperative policy took away farming ownership from the smallholders because of their inability to control the outcomes of their labour. In fact, the system of cooperatives simply exploited the farmers without the same commensurate benefit for their labour. The system of reciprocal support, trust and other communal sense of collective action gave way to a formal and institutionalised system of cooperation dictated from outside the community. It also planted a great sense of lack of interest in farming on the farmers because of their inability to control their means of farming production and supply.

According to Mbah (1997), many farmers gave up farming and looked for jobs that were linked to the colonial government. Farmers abandoned their farms and migrated to the Enugu in search of service jobs. Therefore, smallholder collective action in Ugbawka which was mediated through a system that eschews dishonesty and promotes trust and integrity became powerless. The private sectors, which handled and coordinated the marketing of smallholder products, were largely unregulated by the colonial government and were allowed freedom to wield economic and political power above the farmers. Ojowu and Mensah (1988) argue that the economic power relations between the farmers and the private sector favoured the latter, which in effect cowed the farmers' interest and motivation for farming. Meanwhile, the cooperative approach to smallholder collective action did not improve cooperation amongst the farmers. Farmers became less interested in agriculture and in community service. Most of the incentives for collective action were stripped away with the introduction of the new cooperative approach. The system did not create room or opportunity for the farmers to negotiate the price for their commodities. The

farmers were also unable to control where and who to sell their product, and were thus unable to control the price of their commodity. Moreover, the system was accompanied by an agricultural programme that jettisoned local knowledge and promoted foreign knowledge. Ijere noted that to achieve the objective of economic exploitation of the smallholder farmers, through consistent supply and control of smallholder produce, the colonial government educated the farmers in scientific and economic methods of agriculture and in the importation and distribution of agricultural implements perceived to be superior to those locally manufactured (Ijere, 1974, p. 299).

Inevitably by controlling the way and means by which the farmers work and cooperate, the colonial government crafted and determined the political, moral and material conditions upon which the success and failure of the labour of smallholders were measured. Beside the quest to control the smallholder product, the colonial motivation was also to ensure less foreign competition in the products. For instance, the British were very cautious about German interest in Nigeria's agricultural products. As a consequence, they reserved the country's trade and commerce to British companies alone (Ijere, 1974). Therefore, the structure and operations of smallholder collective action was an exclusive reserve of the British. Non-British private firms who wanted to export smallholder produce paid fines and fees that were not redistributed to the smallholders. Around 1919, there was a £2 per tonne duty on all palm kernel purchased in Nigeria by non-British merchants and eight-ninth of palm kernel and four-fifth of other commodities were reserved for shipment to United Kingdom only; an economic policy and return which was never ploughed back to the development of smallholders in Nigeria, and which was also designed to ensure lack of alternative foreign interest in Nigerian agricultural products (Hancock, 1942, p. 116). The smallholder collective action through cooperative was not voluntary. Farmers were coerced and forced to either join and/or face severe sanctions. Colonial administration institutionalised mandatory membership up until 1950. (Chidebelu, 1986) noted that the colonial government through the divisional governments forced compulsory registration and membership of cooperatives on all smallholders. This

lack of ownership is the reason why (Agbo, 2009) contends that there is still sceptism around cooperatives and formal smallholder collective action in Enugu South East Nigeria.

4.4 Smallholder Collective Action and Post-Colonial Policy Inconsistencies

The introduction of formal collective action in form of cooperatives in Nigeria during the colonial period marked a change in the way smallholder collective action functioned. Moreover, it constituted a shift towards the use and purpose of smallholder collective action in Nigeria as a means of organising farmers. The formalisation of smallholder collective action through coercive membership by the government on the farmers created a lasting negative impression and perception of collective action through cooperatives (Chidebelu, 1986, Agbo, 2009). At the initial period of the post-colonial era, there was a shift away from forceful and compulsory membership to voluntary membership that was supervised and controlled by regional governments.

After colonialism, the regional government adopted the colonial pattern of smallholder collective action by sticking to the use of cooperatives as a way of ensuring continued control of farm produce. Agbonlahor et al. (2012) noted that after Nigeria's independence, the regional governments retained the use of cooperatives as a way of securing quantitative increase in farm output, as well as a way of ensuring the control of the movement of farm products from rural farms to export points. Abdu and Marshall (1990) pointed out that independence in 1960 did not actually bring about any major change in agricultural policy but rather, the post-colonial government embarked on the First National Development Plan (NDP) that was ill-conceived and less strategic. The NDP continued the import substitution policy that had begun in the 1950s throughout the early 1960s. Colonial policy continuation thus affected Nigeria's agricultural economy during the fall in world commodity prices in the early 1960s, thereby threatening the fragile financial stability of the newly independent Nigeria. In order to mediate the effect of the fall in world commodities, the government increased taxation and further reduced the commodity price of smallholder - produce. In the mid

period of 1960s, there was a change in policy after a warning from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) that pushed the government to revert to the centralised system of agricultural control, and to improve the public spending for the agricultural sector. At this juncture the government had gone deeply into in the use of cooperatives to control the supply and export of the major agricultural commodities in Nigeria.

4.4.1 The Pains of the Civil War

In 1967, the Nigerian-Biafra Civil war affected agriculture in Ugbawka and other communities in Igbo land. The war dislocated almost the entirety of smallholders in the Eastern Region. Families were separated and forced into different areas as internally displaced people and refugees in other parts of Nigeria and neighbouring countries. Most of the policies and programmes of the post-independence administration of Eastern Nigeria were either temporarily halted or completely abandoned following the eruption of the civil war. Plantations, farm settlements and other agricultural establishments that characterized government policies at the time were abandoned. Even the aggressive marketing of fertilizer and other government agricultural extension services suffered severe neglect. Food production came under server attack as the outbreak of the war disrupted the smallholders' food production and several agricultural infrastructures were destroyed (Iwuagwu, 2012, Kirk-Greene, 1971) .

The outbreak of the war also led to the conscription of able bodied men into the Biafra army, thereby depleting available hands in agriculture. According Kirk-Greene (1971, p. 357)

> *"The young man who sneaked about the village, avoiding service in his country's armed forces was unpatriotic; that young and able-bodied school teacher who preferred to distribute relief when he should be fighting his country's war, was not only unpatriotic but was doing a woman's work, while those who helped these loafers to dodge their civic duties should henceforth re-examine themselves"*

It has been argued that the action taken by the Biafra government was necessary for the survival of Biafra. However, it also had tremendous effects on the agricultural sector as labour hitherto engaged in agricultural and commercial activities was henceforth channelled to the war effort. Igbo in other part of Nigeria also returned to the Igbo land and added pressure to an already pressured food economy. In effect, the ensuing war not only sapped the area of its manpower resources, but also increased the demand for food resulting from the additional mouths that now had to be fed due to high number of Igbo returnee (Martin, 1988). In addition, up to one million lives were also lost during the war thereby reducing further the manpower required for agriculture in Igboland (Igbokwe, 1995). There was also the loss of farmland following the evacuation of conquered areas and movement into the hitherto reserved farmland for abode. Nigerian soldiers not only killed human beings, they destroyed farm lands and crops. Reports indicate that communities in Igbo land whose harvests were either destroyed or eaten up by these soldiers never recovered from the loss. Nigerian army was also using hunger as a war tool against Biafra and targeting crops and farm land was one of the strategies used by Nigeria during the war. The sporadic attacks by the Nigerian army could also not allow farmers to continue their farming as they don't know where the next strike will be. By the end of 1968, virtually all the major food producing areas of Igboland had come under the federal troops (Iwuagwu, 2012).

By the time the war ended, most smallholder farmers in Ugbawka and many Igbo communities had lost their crops, harvest and, in some cases, farmland. For an economy that depended on farming and commercial activities, there was nothing to come back to. The purposeful targeting of the farm lands and markets by the Nigerian Army also resulted in a complete lack of motivation of farmers to get back to farming. Former farmers who were also recruited into the Biafra Army were disillusioned with agriculture and unwilling to return to farming considering the high taxation imposed on crops (Idachaba, 1985). The movement of the Igbos during the war also resulted in occupational change and many had taken up different occupations.

On the other side, some communities had no other alternative than farming as the only way of sustaining their livelihoods. There were no economic activities to go back to and farming became the only alternative. It was also reported that famers had buried some of the crops like yam, cocoyam and other seed crops in the ground to preserve them for later years (Iwuagwu, 2012).

The war had a grave effect on Igbo economic life in general and agriculture in particular. After the war, the environment for production was lacking– smallholders lacked institutional support from the government but returned to smallholder collective action based on community assemblage anchored in trust and reciprocity.

4.4.2 The Post War Agricultural Development Policies

The second phase of agricultural policy in Nigeria was the period after the Nigerian/Biafra civil war. Soon after the war, agricultural output declined. The war dislocated agriculture and the transport system through which export was enabled (Watts and Shenton, 1984, p. 188), and the smallholder farmers were unable to continue smoothly having lost most of their input and farm tools during the war. In most cases, many could not afford a start-up input in farming any longer. In eastern Nigeria, for example, palm oil plantations were completely destroyed (Daramola et al., 2008). Not surprisingly, the export of the three main export crops cocoa, palm oil and groundnut fell by 20%, 40% and 50%, respectively (Wells, 1974). Besides, the discovery of oil and the growing oil production salvaged Nigeria from impending doom. However, the proceeds from the oil boom were not invested in agriculture but rather conscripted into commerce, construction and manufacturing in favour of urban real sectors, leading to the abandonment of agriculture which was left in tatters This boom in construction and services in the city necessitated the migration of both land and labour from the rural agricultural sector to the urban industrial sector. However, despite labour migration, at least 70% of the total population was still employed by the agricultural sector in the 1970s (Sokari-George, 1987).

In response to the negative growth in agriculture, the second phases of agricultural policies in Nigeria saw a reversal from a laissez faire- to an interventionist approach. In the face of a noticeable decline in the performance of the agricultural sector, the government launched noticeable interventions in policies to revive the agriculture came in force with the establishment of new agricultural institutions and programmes. The broad aim was to facilitate agricultural marketing, to reduce production costs, and to enhance product prices as incentives for increased agricultural production (Manyong et al., 2005, p. 39). The federal government then took over broad agricultural development from the regional government. Some of the policy- highlights included the establishment of an agricultural commodity marketing and pricing policy in 1977 during the third national development plan to replace the hitherto regional multi-commodity boards inherited from 1954 (Federal Republic Of Nigeria, 1975, Manyong et al., 2005). Nevertheless, the new boards were still established along commodity lines and focused mainly on export crops: cocoa, groundnut, palm produce, cotton, rubber, and food grains. While the major export crops had separate commodity boards, the food grain was lumped under one board, thus underlining the attention on cash crops and less consideration for food crops.

The establishment of the food grain board was the first initiative, and was a response to the increasing food decline. It administered a price policy system whereby the food price was fixed nationally and, in most cases, the board intervened as buyers of last resort during price fluctuations and volatility. The government was also responsible for input supply and distribution and equally implemented an agricultural input subsidy policy inherited from most of the regional governments under whose control the agricultural sector was vested in the first period. Between 1976 and 1979, fertilizers attracted 75% of subsidies wholly borne by the federal government, and later reversed into a shared policy between the federal government and the regional government and the farmers in the ratio of 50% (federal), 25% (regional) and 25% (farmers) respectively. Seeds also attracted 50% subsidy, agrochemicals 50% and tractor hire which was operated at the state level attracted between 25% to 50% subsidy at different times of the period (Manyong et al., 2005, p. 41).

Reacting to the migration of rural agrarian labour into urban construction, manufacturing and services industry, the government also came up with an agricultural mechanisation policy to substitute for the lack of agricultural manpower. There were tractor hire units at the states; liberalised import for farm equipment; land clearing assistance from the government and the launching of a machinery ownership scheme in 1980 to encourage farmers to own farm machines through government shared cost formula (Federal Republic Of Nigeria, 1976, Federal Republic Of Nigeria, 1975). Equally, applicable during this period was the policy on the mobilisation of rural smallholders through cooperatives that also served as channel for distribution of subsidized farm inputs as well as imported food commodities. Gradually, Nigeria was becoming a food import economy River Basin Development Authority was also established in 1977 in the various zones of the country to provide land and water needs for agricultural and rural development, which came after the creation of the Nigerian Agricultural Credit Bank (NACB) in 1973 as a specialized credit institution for loans to smallholders and large scale farmers under the second National Development Plan (Federal Republic Of Nigeria, 1970, p. 3 &110, Abdu and Marshall, 1990). Extension services were encouraged as a knowledge transfer mechanism through which research and development outcomes are passed on to rural smallholders.

The government also enacted some legal frameworks and decrees to promote agricultural development. Amongst them were the enterprises promotion decrees of 1972, which were synonymous with indigenisation and encouragement of Nigerian investors into agriculture on a large scale. Of the existing enterprises, 28 were reserved exclusively for Nigerians and 25 were to be based on joint ownership between Nigerians and foreign investors insofar as there was 40% Nigerian equity participation in the enterprise. In 1977, the enterprises promotion decree was promulgated albeit with no lesser restriction than the previous in 1972 except for the categorization of the enterprise into three categories and the raising of Nigerian equity participation to 60% and 40% for the second and third schedule enterprises

respectively (Manyong et al., 2005). In addition to the aforementioned decrees, the government came up with the Land Used Act of 1979 that vested all land in the hand of the state. Statutory control was then bestowed to the state government and local government for urban and rural customary lands respectively.

Macroeconomic policies were also implemented as a measure to improve agriculture in Nigerian during this phase. They included fiscal, monetary, and trade policies. The fiscal policies came through budgetary, tax, wages, and debt management policies. The budgetary allocation to agriculture at this period came with high capital and recurrent expenditure at both the federal and state level. Both levels of government were thus operating on a budget deficit, which mainly unaccounted for low investment in agriculture. This was blamed on the increasing oil revenue, high overhead cost on public sectors and government investment in state owned and managed enterprises (Manyong et al., 2005, pp. 44-5). The government equally eliminated the export tax and reduced taxable income and profits on the agricultural sector in order to incentivize producers of export crops and to relief new agricultural enterprises (Walkenhorst, 2007, p. 6). Wage policies introduced by the government by increasing minimum wage equally accelerated inflation and widened the gap between urban and rural dwellers, thereby accelerating the pace of rural-urban migration and the abandonment of the agricultural sector. Invariably, government policies constituted an antithesis to rural agricultural development. Investing in rural agricultural was thus shrouded with disincentives, shortage of rural labour, high rural wage and of course high cost of production. In addition, poor infrastructure and the diversion of revenue generated through agricultural export into urban social services and government parastatals further accelerated the decline of the agricultural sector. Monetary policies such as tariffs, quantitative restrictions, and foreign exchange regulations, furthermore were detrimental to the interests of export-oriented smallholder farmers.

Overall, it has been argued that the Nigerian government in this period of time took the wrong path to agricultural development (Manyong et al., 2005, Daramola et al., 2008, Walkenhorst, 2007). The policies resulted in high fiscal spending and increased

the national debt. Economically, it was unsustainable and the government was going through incessant and somewhat import trial period during which import went from restriction to dumping especially around the boom period and back to restriction around 1982 (Daramola et al., 2008). The petro-dollar contradiction also shifted Nigeria's attention on oil revenues rather than on the diversification of the economy, leading to import licensing and currency overvaluation, which cheapened import at the detriment of export. Moreover, while all of this was going on, the smallholder farmers were profoundly marginalised in agriculture revenue allocation (Watts and Lubeck, 1983, p. 119).

In the third development plan of 1975, of all the total allocated capital to agriculture (N3.1 billion in 1997) 30 percent was allocated to massive irrigation schemes, 14 percent went to direct production schemes under state government management and 10 percent went to extension services (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1975). Smallholder collective action also witnessed divisive policies in Nigeria at this period. However, the government sought to further exclude and demotivate the smallholders by favouring large scale and mechanised agriculture against smallholding." Abdu and Marshall (1990, p. 319) strongly remarked that collective action through cooperatives not only failed the smallholders but also destroyed the collective spirit of Nigerian smallholders. It excluded them from the market they once dominated. Lawal (1985) added that the location of the primary financial institutions responsible for credit to smallholders constituted an obstacle to rural smallholders.

The Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB) was an exclusionary institution that permitted only registered farmers of government controlled cooperatives to have access to credit facilities. It also served as a way of government control over the smallholder products. Subsidies, inputs and seeds were supplied to smallholders who belonged to the government controlled cooperatives. This marginalisation crippled unregistered smallholder farmers and gave the cooperative members some advantages over market inputs. According to Abdu and Marshall (1990), informal sources of credit remained an important and the only source of credit for many smallholder producers who were not members of the government registered

cooperatives. To access credit, smallholders resorted to collective action through complex networks of social relations involving ties of kinship, friendship, clienteles and religion. In some cases, they used their harvest as a collateral to access credit (Abdu and Marshall, 1990, Clough, 1985). One of the means through which smallholders who were not part of the formal government cooperatives survived were the "*Isusu or Esusu system*" which has been maintained and sustained by smallholder farmer from the pre-colonial period till date.

The Federal Government of Nigeria also conceded to this marginalisation of the smallholders when it stated that:

> *So far, the direct lending Schemes (by NACB) have tended to favour corporate, large-scale farms and farmers who possess adequate collaterals. The on-lending schemes through which credit was expected to reach the small-scale farmers via the cooperatives or other groups have not fared very well due to lack of the right institutional and/or organisational structures for agricultural credit administration*
>
> (Federal Republic Of Nigeria, 1981, p. 85)

Besides, the stringent, discriminatory and inappropriate conditions attached to the credit were in no way accessible to rural smallholders and they also lacked the know-how and capacity to fulfil the conditions. Overall assessment of the post-colonial collective action through cooperatives shows that it failed to reach the bulk of the smallholders and destroyed most of the existing informal and functioning smallholder collective action structures prior to colonialism.

4.4.3 Towards Structural Adjustment

The third phase of the Nigeria agricultural policy direction coincided with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) global wide policy on 'less government more market', otherwise known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s. Under the IFIs prescribed policy framework, the governments of most developing

countries were asked to withdraw support from social services including subsidies and direct support to agriculture. The effect of the policies of the second phases has left Nigeria in a devastating economic situation. The country was submerged into a fiscal and currency deficit. The deficient was further exacerbated by the growing level of mismanagement of public funds, as well as ongoing corruption and political rent seeking that characterised the military era of the Babangida's regime. The national debt of the country grew beyond bounds; hence, SAP was the condition upon which IFIs would grant Nigeria new credit. In July 1986, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) accepted the IMF's conditions and SAP formed the policy prescriptions against national public opinion in Nigeria. At the centre of SAP were the market-determined exchange rate and the elimination of the import licensing system (World Bank, 1989, p. 6).

As a result, the government withdrew funds and support from agriculture including its direct control of production activities. Subsidies were cut back, price control was withdrawn, input and output marketing activities were liberalized, and the currency was devalued in order to trigger competition (Walkenhorst, 2007), thus exposing smallholders to unhealthy competition in a liberalised agricultural market. Moreover, the government abolished commodity marketing boards, removed special interest rates on rural loans and placed greater emphasis on availability of agricultural credit whilst banning importation of some food grains and crops like wheat, maize, rice, vegetable oil, poultry and animal feed (World Bank, 1989, p. 7). The policies initiated by the government were interpreted by many as corrective measures to pre SAP policies which were viewed as distortive and unsustainable. Manyong at al. (2005, p. 47) highlighted four distinctive categories of Nigerian agricultural policies during SAP: a) expenditure reduction and demand management policies aimed at influencing the domestic absorption through fiscal and monetary corrections; b) expenditure switching policies aimed at altering domestic relative prices in favour of tradable and in improving price competiveness of export commodities and import competing goods, c) market liberalisation policy aimed at freeing the market and allowing market interaction to shape the economy while minimizing government administrative control

and interference in the market and finally d) institutional and structural policies designed to eliminate structural constrains such as the flow and exchange of technology and sharing of information.

The philosophical underpinning of the SAP policies was rooted in the neoliberal economic framework that emphasises the withdrawal of the state and the entrusting of growth in the market forces whereby the private sector would drive the economy while the state merely played a facilitating role. Within the Nigerian agriculture, the SAP policies freed government from agricultural support to smallholder farmers based on the neoliberal assumption that Nigerian agriculture should focus inwardly on in deepening local resources to ensure food self-sufficiency whilst allowing the market to play the leading role. It was argued that the introduction of SAP signalled an increase in income for export oriented smallholder farmers because of the abolishment of marketing boards (World Bank, 1989). Price increases were therefore passed on to the smallholder farmers who can then keep 100% of the product sales provided these were kept in a domiciliary account (Daramola et al., 2008), as an incentive to encourage production and boost export. The Export Incentive and Miscellaneous Provisions Decree was enacted in 1986, to support merchant and commercial banks in risk bearing towards exports. This was followed by the establishment of the Nigerian Export Credit Guarantee and Insurance Corporation in 1988, which later transformed to Nigerian Export–Import Bank (NEXIM) and commenced operations in 1991 to carry out the following functions[11];

- Provision of export credit guarantee and export credit insurance facilities to its clients.
- Provision of credit in local currency to its clients in support of exports.
- Establishment and management of funds connected with exports.
- Maintenance of a foreign exchange revolving fund for lending to exporters who need to import foreign inputs to facilitate export production.
- Maintenance of a trade information system in support of export business.
- Provision of domestic credit insurance where such a facility is likely to assist exports.

[11] Please read more on NEXIM at http://www.neximbank.com.ng/about_us.php

Like previous agricultural development policies in Nigeria, the SAP policy phase failed to live up to expectations and probably left Nigerian worse than it it was initially. Agriculture was gradually eroding from the map of economic activities, and national export of previous cash crops like groundnut, cocoa and palm oil was further going down the drain. However, the SAP policy was initially programmed to last until the year 2000 but with the political instability in Nigeria between 1993 to 1999, agriculture received little if not zero attention. The attention of the polity was more focused toward finding political solutions following the annulment of June 12, 1993 general elections. It was also the period of economic sanctions on Nigeria from major western allies including Canada, USA and its former colonizer UK which imported agricultural produce from Nigeria. Agriculture during that period was a forgone debate and the Nigerian food bill was growing from year to year while production and productivity stagnated. Moreover, the oil windfall from 1991 has withered away following successive military regimes known for embezzlement, corruption, mismanagement of public funds and political rent seeking. In fact, the only thriving business left was the government itself (Daramola et al. 2008).

4.4.4 The New Nigerian Agricultural Policy

The next phase, the New Nigerian Agricultural Policy, started in 1999. After the 1999 general elections in Nigeria that ushered in the current democratic dispensation, the FGN took two years (2001) to identify agricultural policy priorities for the country. The policy was dubbed the New Nigerian Agricultural Policy (NNAP) divided policy functions between the three tries of government; federal, state and local government to avoid duplication and overlapping of functions (Walkenhorst, 2007). The policy direction articulated in the NNAP shared most of the characteristics of the pervious policies (especially the SAP policy) but underlined the imperativeness that the ministry of agriculture must provide implementation direction and better articulation in order for the overall objective of the policy to realised. The objectives of the NNAP retained the features of the old policies through scaling back and reforming the non-fuel export subsidy regime, nonetheless with determination to rid the sector off corruption and fraud that undermined the success of the previous policies. However,

there was a lack of certainty around government agricultural initiatives during that period. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) established in 2000 was very unsuccessful and clearly lacked an agricultural component in its implementation (Okoro and Ujah, 2009, p. 34). In 2004, Nigerian agricultural policies were largely embedded in three documents: The National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) and the Rural Sector Strategy (RSS). NEEDS and NAP were anchored on agricultural development as an alternative trajectory for income generation and diversification of the economy towards non-oil sectors rooted in local participation. Nevertheless, it was basically promoting market-oriented and private sector-driven agricultural development (Daramola et al., 2008). Like SAP, NEEDS was the handiwork of the IFIs (IMF and World) under the broad framework of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and broadly functioned as the national framework for sector strategies and implementation plans.

Under NEEDS, minimum annual growth rate of 6% per; $3 billion in agricultural exports; reduction in food imports from 14.5% of total imports to 5% by 2007 was benchmarked. A host of Presidential programmes including the Presidential Initiative on Rice Production, Processing and Export, Presidential Initiative on the Development of Vegetable Oil, and the Presidential Initiative on Cassava Production and Export was initiated (Okoro and Ujah, 2009). Moreover, the Federal Government of Nigeria equally adopted the ECOWAS common external tariff, which involved a substantial reduction in import duties (Walkenhorst, 2007, p. 7), with the view to boasting regional integration and the phasing out of special tariffs on sensitive products and quantitative import restrictions. Additionally, the Nigerian Agricultural, Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) was to be recapitalised and given full mandate to act as a financial intermediary to provide soft agricultural credit and rural finance to smallholder farmers as either individuals, groups, or through joint venture. National Agricultural Policy (NAP) on the other hand focused more on agriculture, and aimed at providing the foundation for sustainable growth in agricultural productivity. The Rural Sector Strategy (RSS) was viewed as the perfect road map for transformation

of rural agriculture aimed at boosting productivity and export. These frameworks and initiatives were further replicated at the ministry of agriculture in various states.

This period also coincided with another oil boom and allowed increased budgetary allocation to the agriculture. It was claimed that there was improvement in fertilizer support, seeds, credit and other inputs to the farmers (Daramola et al., 2008), and that Nigerian agriculture at this period recorded 7 per cent growth in 2003/04 (ICAARD, 2006). There also were various ongoing initiatives and projects on agriculture from both government and international donor agencies. The World Bank-assisted Fadama I and II; the FAO assisted the National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS) and the IFAD assisted Root and Tuber Expansion Project. Analysts (Daramola et al., 2008), argued that the combined projects raised Nigerian agriculture by 5.5 percent (CBN, 2005). The agricultural growth indicators and government commitments led to foreign investment in Nigeria through bilateral agencies like the USAID, DFID, CIDA, JICA Chinese and Zimbabwean farmers. The inconsistency of policies continued, and in 2007, agriculture featured in the 7-point agenda of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua. The agricultural goal under the 7-point agenda was to diversify the sector, to ensure food security and to generate rural employment for the youth while ensuring linkage between production, export and poverty reduction. Greater emphasis was given to public- private collaboration; private sector-led input supply and distribution system; favourable monetary policy to ensure access to credit; irrigation project support; agribusiness development and improvement in post-harvest processing; agricultural research and international competition; diversification to alternative export crops for bio-fuel; alignment with international institutions and opportunities like World Trade Organization (WTO), African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the European Union-African-Caribbean and Pacific states agreement (EU-ACP),National Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); increase agricultural budgetary allocation and land reform policy (Federal Republic Of Nigeria Office Of The Presidency, 2007). The goals captured under the 7 points agenda went into the same direction as the previous policies, and Nigerian agriculture continues to live in perilous times. The government of Yaradua failed to accomplish the agricultural

goals set under the 7-point policy agenda. After the death of Yaradau, the overall economic development was suffering including agriculture because the polity was rather engulfed in political manoeuvring and preparation for the 2011 general elections. Therefore, attention towards economic activity was rather low.

On assumption of office in May 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan highlighted that agriculture is one of the key strategic sectors for his administration. On September, 19 2011, the Ministry of Agriculture realised a presidential brief on agricultural development that highlighted the past mistakes of agricultural policies but above all the journey to the bottom from an export country to one of the highest food importers in the world. The goal is to focus on specific and targeted value chains and to promote private sector led agricultural development while ensuring agricultural financing and access to land for foregone investors (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2011). Currently, Nigeria spends N2 trillion annually on food importation out of which 1 billion is spent every day to import rice, N240 billion on sugar and N1.2 trillion annually on fish (234Next, 2011). There has been no significant policy shift from the past administration by the new APC government that came into power in May 2015. The new government has largely retained the policy of the previous administration but strengthened support to smallholders and created agricultural finance opportunities for the farmers through several initiatives.

4.5 Nigerian Agricultural Policy and Rice Production

The food sub-sector of Nigeria boasts of an array of food crops produced in different diverse ecological regions. Cereals like sorghum, maize, millet, and rice; roots and tubers like yam and cassava; legumes like groundnut and cowpeas and others fruits and vegetables are the earliest accessed food in Nigeria's food economy. However, of all the food crops rice is by far the most dominant and important food in Nigeria. Although it has always been a traditional food in Nigeria, it was merely a festive food for occasions like Christmas (UNEP, 2005, p. 5). It dominance in the food sub sector of Nigeria began around 1970. Around the 1960s, Nigerian has the lowest per capital consumption rate of rice in West Africa sub region of around 3 kg (Akpokodje et al., 2003b, p. 1). After the period of 1960s, rice has continued to increase in importance

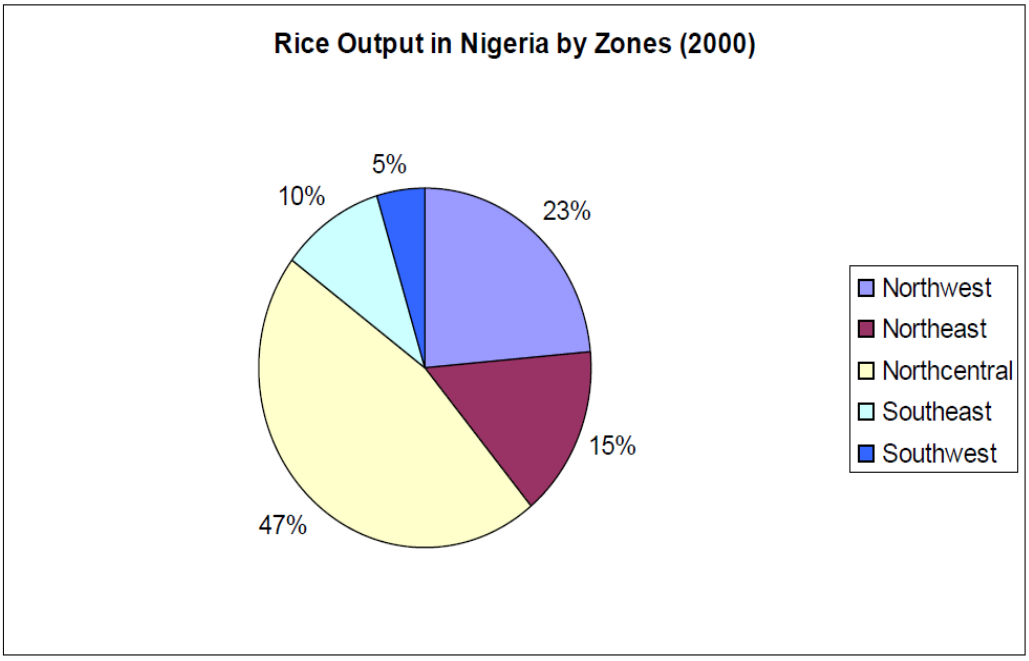
as the most popular staple food in Nigeria. The per capital consumption has recorded annual 7.3 percent growth, rising from 18kg in the 1980s to 22 kg in the 1990s (Ibid), and further to 32 kg per annum in 2008 estimate (Damola, 2010, p. v).

The increase in demand and consumption of rice has been credited to the rise in urbanisation, easy preparation and the convenience of storage (Ekeleme et al., 2008, p. 1). The demand for rice in Nigeria thus puts Nigeria on the rice map regionally and globally. In West Africa, Nigeria is the highest producer of rice (Daramola, 2005), the highest consuming country in Africa (Emodi and Madukwe, 2008) and the highest importer of rice in Africa with around 5 million tonnes annually, constituting25% of Africa's import (Ekeleme et al., 2008, Damola, 2010, p. 2). Hence, rice is no longer a luxury food reserved to the rich in Nigeria, but an everyday staple for both the rich and the poor. A report from World Bank in 1991 indicates that the poorest third of urban households in Nigeria obtained 33 percent of their calories from rice and that expenditure on rice represents the highest on cereal in general (World Bank, 1991), while another report indicates that the rice demand in Nigeria is the highest in the entire African continent (Damola, 2010). Invariably, rice has become a major welfare determinant for the poorest segments of Nigerian households (Akande, 2001).

Nigeria has arable and irrigable land for rice production and rice is produced in all its regions Since the 1970s, rice production has also expanded due to an increase in the areas under rice production as a result of the rising demand and also due incremental yield increase. The regions are classified according to their ecological conditions: The rain-fed lowland accounts for 47% of the total rice production area; the rain-fed upland for 30%, the irrigated lowland accounts for 16%; and the Deepwater (5%) and Mangrove swamp account for less than 1% of total rice area (Damola, 2010, p. 2). The production estimate is around 3.2 million tons of paddy rice or 2.0 million tons of milled rice per annum (Ibid). The table below show characteristic of Rice production system in Nigeria:

Production System	Major States covered	Estimated share of National Area	Average Yield /Ha	Share of Rice Production (%)
Rained Upland	Ogun, Ondo, Abia, mo, Osun, Ekiti, Oyo, Edo, Delta, Niger, Kwara, Kogi, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, FCT & Benue.	30%	1.7	17
Rained Lowland	Adamawa, Ondo, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Delta, Edo, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, all major river valleys e.g. Shallow swamps of Niger basin, Kaduna, basin, & inland swamps of Abakiliki & Ogoja areas.	47%	2.2	53
Irrigated	Adamawa, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi, Borno, Benue, Kogi, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, & Cross River, Kano, Lagos, Kwara, Akwa- Ibom, Ogun	17%	3.5	27
Deep Water Floating	Flooded areas Rima valley – Kebbi State & deep flood areas of Ilushi Delta State	5%	1.3	3
Mangrove Swamp	Ondo, Delta, Edo, Rivers Bayelsa, Cross-River, Akwa Ibom.	1%	2.0	1

Source: (Ezedinma, 2005, p. 4)



Source: (Ezedinma, 2005, p. 5)

The North Central zone is the highest producer of rice in Nigeria accounting for 47% of the total rice output in 2000. This is closely followed by the Northwest: 29%; Northeast: 14%; Southeast: 9% and last but not the least Southwest: 4% (Ibid).

Despite the dominance of rice as a popular staple food in Nigeria and its' consistent increase in demand, domestic production lag behind and was unable to meet the rising consumer demand. As a consequence, Nigeria is ranked one of the largest importer of rice worldwide. This is related to the fact that the majority of rice production comes from poor resourced smallholder farmers in the rural countryside with less than 5 hectares of land, who combine the production of rice with other crops (Daramola, 2005). Efforts by the Nigerian government to address the gap between rice production and consumption have been largely unsuccessful and not in favour of the majority of the smallholder producers across the country. Although the potentials to become self-sufficient in rice is evident in Nigeria, productivity increase has been thwarted by poor fiscal policies, lack of improved processing, quality assurance, poor branding unimproved seed varieties, poor agronomic and postharvest handling practices and above all unfavourable policy environment for the smallholders.

Since evidence shows that smallholder farmers produce most of the domestic output in Nigeria, it would only be logical if not economically necessary to empower the smallholder to increase their productivity while researching on ways to ensure incremental increase and subsidisation of the shot fall from import until the farmers can sufficiently produce for the totality of the Nigerian market. A review of the government policies on rice production since pre 1974 to date would give a good picture of why despite the large pool of ready smallholder rice farmers the Nigerian rice industry has largely remained uncompetitive. The Nigerian rice sector has witnessed policy inconsistency since the early 1970s until now. In some cases, the government levied high tariffs on importation of foreign rice, in other cases the government policy was fairly liberal to rice importation. However, one crosscutting fact about the rice policy in Nigeria is the scandalous manner of import and marketing of rice in Nigeria, which is principally based on access to political capital.

From a historical point of view, there are three indefinable policies phases in Nigeria's rice development: ***The Pre-Ban, the Ban and the Post Ban periods*** (Akande, 2001). Before examining the phases of rice policies in Nigeria, the table below shows rice trends in Nigeria compared to other West African countries.

Table 2.1: Rice-related trends in Nigeria and the rest of West Africa

Indicators	Means 1961-75	Means 1976-83	Means 1984-95	Means 1996-99
Nigeria				
Production (tons)	332,800	806,222	2,306,794	3,189,833
Import (tons)	2,036	420,756	334,974	525,307
Self-reliance ratio (%)	99%	54%	77%	79%
Total Consumption	178,199	833,640	1,599,609	2,248,113
Per capita consumption (kg)	3	12	18	22
West Africa Without Nigeria				
Production (tons)	1,779,376	2,344,073	2,822,635	4,041,384
Import (tons)	416,183	894,073	1,760,884	2,107,146
Self-reliance ratio (%)	65%	56%	42%	50%
Total Consumption (tons)	1,178,753	1,950,821	2,973,885	3,985,721
Per capital consumption (kg)	21	27	30	34

Source: Akpokodje *et al.*, 2001, p.2.

Source: (Akpokodje et al., 2003, p. 2).

4.5.1 Pre-Ban Period: 1971-1985

The first phase of the Nigerian rice policy can be subdivided into two periods: the pre-crisis period from1971-1980, and the crisis period from 1981-1985 (Emodi and Madukwe, 2008). This is the period that preceded the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). One of the key features of this whole period was the introduction of absolute quantitative restrictions on rice imports. The first stage of this period was largely characterised by liberal agriculture policies on rice import. There was no ban on the importation of rice; rather the government was directly involved in filling the gap of rice shortage. The government policy on rice was not very strict but appeared very ad-hoc and reactionary and came at a time when there were emerging rice development policies in Nigeria. Coincidentally, it was at the same point in time when oil was displacing agriculture in the national scale of preference and government attention.

However, during the second stage of this period, i.e. the crisis period from 1981-1985, more stringent measures were introduced, yet there was no outright ban. The government initiated input supply and distribution policy, agricultural input subsidy policy, water resources and irrigation policy, agricultural cooperatives Policy. Also, there was an artificial lowering of the domestic rice price relative to world price through massive importation of rice, which invariably shifts the negative effect to locally produced rice. The effect inevitably was transferred to smallholder rice farmers that dominate domestic rice production in Nigeria. The government assumed the responsibility of importing, distributing and marketing rice, albeit with non-transfer of actual costs to consumers (Emodi and Madukwe, 2008, p. 78). Generally, the government policy on rice at this period was elitist and unfriendly to smallholder rice farmers. As rising food prices threw Nigeria into crisis around late 1970s, the import substitution became the only alternative for the government to meet up with the food demand of the country. The importation of rice which appeared to be under the control of the government was actually in the hands of few elites (cartel) with strong political connections to the government. Rice was growing in importance as the most "*sought after"* staple food in Nigeria. However, its import was saddled in scandalous activities which was deeply rooted in political associations and the elite settlement (Watts and Lubeck, 1983, p. 117). For instance, the landing cost of rice was N15 per bag but it fetched in excess of N100 due to speculative licensing and hoarding (Watts and Lubeck, 1983, p. 118). The policy during this period eroded the competiveness of smallholder rice farmers and served as a disincentive to the smallholder rice farmers in Nigeria (Emodi and Madukwe, 2008).

4.5.2 The Ban Period: 1986 -1995

The second period coincided with the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which was the period of massive government withdrawal from social services and agriculture. It was a period of deepening ostracization of agriculture in general and smallholder farmer in particular from policy considerations. During this period, rice imports were illegal with various trade policies restricting the importation of rice. Tariff, import restrictions, and outright ban on rice import were put in place. It was hoped that

the ban on import will stimulate domestic rice production and encourage the smallholders to increase their production and yield as a result of increased price. However, the twin policy of SAP and import ban without government real investment in smallholder rice production was never going to yield any result. Instead, rice importation thrived on illegality and cross boundary smuggling. Moreover, the overvaluation of the Naira also affected domestic smallholders because it served as an implicit tax on domestic smallholder producers as it made imported rice relatively cheaper (UNEP, 2005, p. 12).

4.5.3 The Post Ban Period: 1995 – date

The Nigerian rice sector is erratic and inconsistent at best. While the ban period era was based on quantitative import restrictions, the post ban era operated a different policy and the government allowed the importation of rice at a 100 percent tariff – it was reduced to 50 percent in 1996 and moved back to 100 percent in 2002 (UNEP, 2005). Therefore, there was a reversal of the liberal policy. The reversion came as a result of IFIs pressure for the reversion of the Nigerian restrictive policy on rice, which was inconsistent with World Bank/IMF liberalisation policy framework. It was also at a period when trade liberation was very important to the rich countries that were looking for entry route into the market of developing countries with restriction without considering the effect such entry would have on millions of smallholder producers that might drop out of their domestic market. It was at the period of transition from General Agreement and Trade and Tariff (GATT) to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The erratic nature of rice policy in Nigerian reflects a clear failure in planning and understanding of what need to be done to stimulate incremental productive increase of rice production in Nigeria through millions of smallholder farmers across the country. Although it has been noted that the basis of the inconsistency and erratic nature of the rice policy is because of the dilemma of securing cheap rice for consumers and ensuring a fair price for producers (UNEP, 2005, p. 13, Emodi and Madukwe, 2008, p. 79), however, the inconsistency was more political than economic and reflect the inability of the government to stand for the interests of the smallholder farmers against the business and political class. According to Ladebo (1999), the

erratic nature of the policy is based on elite pressure and vested interest in rice importation and the demand from the urban class. The new government has expressed desire and optimism to end rice import by 2017, but the details of the policy and its implication on rice import is yet to clarified by the government. The erratic and inconsistent rice policy in Nigeria is captured in the Table below.

Table Chronology of Nigeria's trade policy on rice

Period	Policy Measures
Prior to April 1974	66.6% tariff
April 1974-April 1975	20%
April 1975-April 1978	10%
April 1978-June 1978	20%
June 1978-October 1978	19%
October 1978-April 1979	Imports in containers under 50kg were banned
April 1979	Imports under restricted license only Government Agencies
September 1979	6 month ban on all rice imports
January 1980	Import license issued for 200,000 tones of rice
October 1980	Rice under general import license with no quantitative restrictions
December 1980	Presidential Task Force (PTF) on rice was created and it used the Nigerian National Supply Company to issue allocations to customers and traders
May 1982	PTF commenced issuing of allocations directly to customers and traders in addition to those issued by NNSC
January 1984	PTF disbanded. Rice importation placed under general license restrictions
October 1985	Importation of rice (and maize) banned
July 1986	Introduction of SAP and the abolition of Commodity Boards to provide production incentives to farmers through increased producer prices
1995	100%
1996	50%
1998	50%
1999	50%
2000	50%
2001	85%

Sources: *Sources:* Sutcliffe and Ayomike, 1986; Federal Government Budgets, 1984-1986, 1995-2003; SAP and the Nigerian Economy, 1987; http://oryza.com/africa/nigeria/index.shtml

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the pre-colonial and post-colonial smallholder collective action in Nigeria. It examined the pre-colonial collective action based on community cultural practices, and those which emerged during the colonial period based on enforced system of collective action such as government designed, - controlled and -managed cooperatives. The dynamics reveal the role of colonial policies and colonial businesses in shaping the form of smallholder collective action during the colonial and immediate post-colonial period. This was followed by an exploration of the policies in the post-colonial period, which were diverse and inconsistent.

I have examined the shift in policy- orientation based on compulsory collective action through cooperatives to a voluntary association orchestrated by the new reform agenda of structural adjustment.

This chapter also reviewed the distorted policy trajectories of the Nigerian government from the colonial to recent time. Moreover, it reviewed how policy inconsistency disrupted smallholder farmers. The effect of civil war on smallholder Igbo farmers was equally examined. Particular attention was given to the rice policy trajectories and how they impacted the smallholder rice farmers in Nigeria.

Chapter Five:

5.0 Livelihoods, Agency and Informal Smallholder Collective Action

5.1 Introduction

Contemporary Ugbawka is the product of a mixed history shaped by the combined forces of colonialism, industrial imperialism, trade, globalisation and political development. An understanding of the history could be seen in the various forms of smallholder collective action (see chapter four) which underscored the interaction amongst the farmers in exercising their agency to collectively organise in the pre-colonial period, as well as their relationship with the (pre)colonial administration through a mixture of both government and private sector-driven collective action. The overall aim of this thesis is to present an intensive micro-level analysis of processes of smallholder collective action with the aim of understanding how rice farmers individually and collectively shape their interaction and participation.

This chapter presents a brief ethnography of development and multiple livelihood strategies in Ugbawka. The chapter uses the term 'development' as used in the village sense by Ugbawka people as opposed to how it is used in the development literature and discourse. In short, development in the Ugbawka sense relates mostly to the availability of and access to public and social services and the adaptation of people to changing ways of life including attending churches, political meetings and the frequency of visits by persons who are not from the community. It also relates to the level of infrastructural development including the construction of roads, the availability of pipe borne water and the rate of child education in the community. In most community meetings and discussions, members regularly discuss core issues they perceive as significant in their lives including availability or lack of social services. In fact, the village understanding of development is more nuanced and encompassing and offers a critique to mainstream development that is often reduced to economic development and ignores the social and religious dimension.

This chapter thus focuses on examining two main areas of livelihoods pattern in Ugbawka and individual opportunity to exercise agency. The first section explores the

pattern of livelihood of smallholder farmers in Ugbawka. An understanding of the dynamic between people's livelihoods is not only important in forming an understanding of how and why people participate in collective action but also in deepening the understanding of smallholder farmers' level of participation, inclusion and exclusion in collective action.

Secondly in relation to the shaping of individual opportunities to exercise agency (Toner, 2008a), this chapter provides an overview of the actors and factors which have shaped the development and evolution of Ugbawka. Besides, it provides the link to the broader development change in Nigeria and Igbo society as examined in chapter 4. This is followed by the empirical data that provides an overview of how changes were effected from pre-colonial through the post-colonial period. The process of tracing the changes provided a deeper understanding of how the transition and interaction between internal and external actors positively and/or negatively influenced the development of Ugbawka as a community. This chapter also examined three smallholders collective project in which smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka participated. Analysis of the three projects reveals that smallholder collective action based on formalisation of rules does not necessarily provide access and participation.

5.2 The Profile of Ugbawka as a Community

Ugbawka is a peri-urban community in the outskirt of Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State, South Eastern Nigeria. Ugbawka covers an approximate land size of fifty square kilometres. Agbani and Akpugo borders Ugbawka to the north, to the eastern axis by Ihuokpara and Nara and to the west by Amuri, Ogbaku and Nenwe and to the southern axis by Nomeh and Mburubu. For most part, Ugbawka is a low-lying, well-watered area with three small perennial rivers. Land in Ugbawka is reasonably fertile and the eastern and western parts are mostly swampy during rainy seasons (Mbah, 1997).

Enugu State is one of the five (5) states found in the South Eastern Nigeria and located between latitude and longitude of 50 501N – 70 061 N and 60 531E – 7 55

E(Ezike, 1998). Enugu has boundary with Ebonyi in the East, Kogi and Benue in the north, Anambra in the west and Imo and Abia in the south. In Enugu, 59% of the population are rural residents (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Ugbawka is located in Nkanu East local government of Enugu State.

Figure 1: A Map of Enugu State showing the location of Ugbawka in Nkanu East

Ugbawka has always been an important community in the history of Enugu State. Its proximity to the State capital made it an important community since the colonial era. The economy of the Ugbawka is heavily reliant on agriculture involving animal husbandry, cash and food crop production. In the 1990s, it was estimated that the entire rural population of Ugbawka was fully engaged in agriculture in different forms (Mbah, 1997). The development of Ugbawka community dates back to the pre-colonial period. Its rich palm tree made it a nerve centre for production and commercialisation of palm wine used in the Igbo society for all forms of ceremonies

and rituals. The fertility of the soil made it a converging point for sales of farm produce and for exchange of farm goods.

Its development expanded during the colonial period due to the high production of palm oil, an important cash crop for colonial administration and the construction of a railway line that linked the hinterland to various markets within Nigeria. During colonialism, Ugbawka was one of the train stops in the outskirts of Enugu; and the loading bay for export of palm produced in and around Enugu. Additionally, due to its close proximity with Enugu, migration from Ugbawka to Enugu was rather minimal. Ugbawka indigenes who worked as public servants commuted from their community to the city capital, a practice which has continued to-date. Its influence as a trade and export hub did not diminish but rather increased as the period evolved especially when it became one of the major rice farming communities in Enugu state years before the end of colonialism.

The Ugbawka community are mostly smallholder farmers and owing to their skill in agriculture, their sources of livelihood are dependent on the availability of arable land and fertility of the soil. Land is at the core of all the activities in Ugbawka. They cultivate various crops including rice, yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize and vegetables. In addition, the smallholder farmers grow trees/crops of high economic value such as palm tree, oil bean, breadfruit, trees for timber, cashew, mango, orange and bananas. Cassava and rice are the prominent viable cash crop widely grown by the people. Mbah (1997) pointed that cassava emerged as the major crop and was closely followed by rice after the Nigerian-Biafra civil war (1967-1970) due to the growing demand for rice in Nigeria in the late 1960s to early 1970s. The people are also reputed for keeping livestock particularly goats, sheep, dogs and poultry (chicken and ducks), while fishing and hunting were also practiced.

Since the pre-colonial era, smallholder farmers routinely disposed of surplus of their agricultural produce in *Afor* market day, a practice that persisted to-date. The market at Afor continues to attract traders from far and near in search of cheap agricultural

supplies for the urban markets. Agricultural market is not a new phenomenon to Ugbawka farmers because their interaction with colonial traders exposed them to cash crops. Besides farming, Ugbawka people are also adept in traditional weaving, palm wine tapping, blacksmithing and other economic/business activities.

Ugbawka benefitted from the early presence of transport infrastructure during the colonial period. As noted earlier, the construction of the railway line was a turning point for Ugbawka in terms of opening up space for trade with other communities and attracting different categories of people interested in various trading activities. Apart from having a significant effect on trade and becoming a hub for distribution of some agricultural produce, Ugbawka was a strong nucleus for migration and settlement of human population along the rail line– the by-product of this was the provision of modern social and economic amenities such as schools and churches (Chukwu, 2014). Currently, Ugbawka remained a crossover community where people intending to stay closer to the city reside to enable them to access both city facilities and community life. However, as years of government neglect and corruption deepened in Nigeria, most of the social facilities that attracted migrants from other communities to Ugbawka began to decline including the railway, which was formerly a major factor that attracted people to the community. At the time of this research, the railway line was dilapidated and non-functional and most of the colonial buildings were unrecognizably damaged.

5.3 Land and Livelihoods of Smallholder Rice Farmers in Ugbawka

This section considers the livelihood sources and its distribution in the community and how differentiated livelihoods sources by different actors determine power relations in smallholder collective action functioning. Before, examining how land is owned and allocated specifically in Ugbawka, it is expedient to first examine the Igbo customary and traditional land ownership.

According to the Igbo's belief and tradition, *ala* (land) is a gift from God (Chukwu) and from ancestors (Ifediora, 2014). Igbos see themselves as stewards of God's

resources, which is demonstrated especially in communally owned land (Ifediora, 2014). This is supported by Jones (1949) who opined that the Igbo system of land tenure is based on three cardinal principles: a) that the land ultimately belongs to the community and cannot be alienated from it without its consent; b) that within the community the individual shall have security of tenure for the land he requires for his compounds, his gardens, and his farms; and c) that no member of the community shall be without land. This resonates with the position of Dike (1983) who noted that in Igboland, land belongs to the community.

However, one of the important features of the Igbo land tenure system is its continuous adaption to the changing times and circumstances based on contextual requirements at certain periods in time. Jones (1949) noted that in order to understand land tenure in Igbo society, it is crucial to understand the process of adapting to changes in society's population density. However, the dominant right or absolute interest belongs to the community or the social group, which controls the land through ancestral lineage and transfer.

Ugbawka, like other parts of Igbo society, professes a vague mythical charter to land ownership in which history is very crucial and often couched in custom and tradition in order to justify claims of land ownership (Mbah, 1997). Traditionally, in Ugbawka land tenure is based on patriarchy (male ancestral lineage) and is held in trust by the oldest member of the family who in theory has the responsibility of allotting parcels of land to family members (Dike, 1983, p. 856). Therefore, the traditional land tenure system in Ugbawka expects women to cultivate the land entrusted to her husband. Traditionally, it debars women from absolute ownership of land and should any woman leave her husband, the expectation is that such a woman would forfeit the land under her control (Jones, 1949). However, in so far as she remains in her late husband's household, she is entitled to the land and can continue to make use of the land until her death, in which case the ownership of the land is transferred to her sons as the next trust holder.

Land in many Igbo societies was considered to belong to the living and the dead and any idea of deposing land from the ancestral line was considered sacrilegious. Moreover, for the Ugbawka people, land must be preserved for the coming generations. In general, there are four categories of land that exist in Ugbawka based on the individual and community needs for land. The first is what is generally called the compound land, which is primarily for residents and it is based on need for occupation. This category of land covers the households where people weave their routine existence – it could form small gardens, which are primarily for women for the cultivation of vegetables, corn, pepper and other farm product that solve immediate food needs for the family (Huth, 1969).

The second category is the farmland, which is where people farm but do not have permanent residency. It is completely outside the compound and is strictly for farming. However, during farming season, people and families can set up temporary living spaces in order to concentrate on farm demands. Thirdly is the sacred land, which is reserved and exclusively dedicated to the community deities or oracle and is not meant for farming. Then there is the common land, which is what is called in Igbo land "*Ajo Ofia"* meaning deadly bush. This is commonly reserved for burying people who committed atrocities while alive or people who died of deadly diseases. Generally, people keep away from *Ajo Ofia* for fear of catching deadly diseases or getting in contact with evil spirits, which are believed to live with the dead in Igbo traditional societies (Dike, 1983).

However, over the years, as ancestral lineage began to dissolve in different family units and due to population density and settlement, new forms of family union in the form of extended family emerged and land conflict regarding its access and usage rights begins to occur. Land user rights, which were formerly based on trust, began to disappear and transform into ownership rights as people and families from the same ancestral lineage shared land in order to avoid extended family land conflict and to ensure balanced ownership rights within the extended families that make up the ancestral lineage. However, there was still retention of some parts of the land for the

lineage in a way that land ownership rights could be traced back to ancestral lineage based on inheritance.

There was no traditional landless class or group in Ugbawka. Even though conflict overtime has resulted in the distribution of land within ancestral lineages and extended family lines, ownership is largely communal rather than individualistic. As the community keeps expanding, claims to land ownership in Ugbawka lie on the extent to which the land was inherited or bequeathed to a man by his father (Mbah, 1997). However, such ownership hardly connotes the exact relationship between such an occupier and the land. Even though he has full right to its produce and appropriates the land for agricultural or other productive purposes, he nonetheless sees himself more as a right holder for the next generation of male heirs (Chubb, 1961).

Traditionally, ownership and means of acquisition of land in Ugbawka can be classified under different types and categories. The first is the communal land. This is the type of land that no one can lay claim to but is seen as owned and controlled by the community. This type of land emerges out of some highly existential belief in spirits. The community through the community elders and/or chiefs does the allocation of this type of land after consultation with the village council. Land like the communal land can also be used for community projects like the establishment of community clinic, community school, the digging of pipe borne water and other type of community development project (Mbah, 1997). This land is rarely allocated for family but could also be used for the construction of a new village or community square (Dike, 1983, p. 858).

The next type of ownership is family land. According to Chubb (1961), family land appears less loose than communal land and refers to land owned by small kin group or extended family in which every adult male member possesses the right to farm and use portion of the land every farming season in accordance with the rotational cycle. Within the bracket of family land in Ugbawka is what is described as personal land,

which broadly connotes landlord rights over land and refers to land in which an individual has inherited or acquired which is at his disposal without being subjected to family or common sanction (Mbah, 1997). Personal land becomes possible in Ugbawka due to intergenerational demands and adaptation to changing demands for land use. The introduction of the money economy also resulted in the opening up of the Igbo rigid land tenure system and made it possible for unlimited range of choices for individuals including the choice of owning a land privately. Land is no longer sacred and can be exchanged for money and can also be used for different purposes beyond cultivation (Dike, 1983). Although the influence of money on land is still vaguely viewed as unacceptable, Ugbawka has accepted this generational transition and private interests are now allowed to buy and own land. However, it is expected that the purchase of the land passes through some known traditional processes of approval (Green, 1941). Such process of approval required explaining to the elders by the buyer what the land will be used for and to assure the elders that the land will be well taken care of by the buyer. The type of land ownership also dissolves the patriarchal nature of land ownership in Ugbawka because the personalisation and commodification of land means that any individual who can afford land could buy and apply the land for his/her private use.

Farmlands can also be acquired in Ugbawka through pledge. This form of land acquisition became possible with the introduction of the money economy and the commodification of land in Igbo societies. This is a derivative form of acquiring some rights in land – the method of land acquisition by which an owner of a piece of land gives usufructuary right to another person by borrowing money from the person. The value attached to land means that people can use land as collateral to borrow money from others and this has become acceptable in Igbo societies. In some instances, families borrow money to send a member of the family to study abroad while using the land as collateral for certain number of years. However, this can be done with family land or with personal land. It should be noted that pledged land varies from parties to parties depending on the agreement. However, in most cases, land is not lost permanently to the pledgee but can be redeemed even when the time frame

expires based on agreed terms and conditions for the pledge. Also the children of the pledger can also redeem the pledged land in future based on certain understanding that existed during the pledge. There are also occasions when the pledger concedes that the pledgee could take responsibility of selling proceeds from economic trees like palm oil, cashew etc. in order to begin the process of recouping the money back (Mbah, 1997, Dike, 1983).

Temporal borrowing is another form of acquiring land in Ugbawka. As population growth continues to rise, the need for land increased and there is considerable pressure on people who have less land but expanded family. Land access, retention and use also became a matter of survival because access for land became limited. However, community members that have such problems of limited land for farming adapt to land shortage through different forms of temporal land and borrowing or land showing. A grant of an interest in land maybe made for a short duration of time, which may be as short as one-year to enable the grantee to put the land to a particular use, usually farming (Jones, 1949, Dike, 1983). In Ugbawka, people with surplus lands often allow for temporal and flexible management of their land by others in need of land for farming. Whilst the temporal tenant is expected to meet the immediate needs of the land, there is often certain protective measure to deter wanton and unexpected removal from the land. This offers an alternative to outright alienation from land use. Both family and private lands are often pledged to temporal tenants according to custom and native law of Ugbawka and the tenant is expected to comply and vacate the land as per the agreement, which is normally after the harvest of farm crops. However, land pledged can be renewed and redeemed depending on agreed terms and conditions between the parties and also depending on satisfactory assessment of the use of the land by the owner (Mbah, 1997).

Lease as a mean of land acquisition differs from pledge. It differs markedly from the conventional lease and the commonest in Ugbawka is what is called *Ngosi Ana,* which literally translates to showing of land. This has been necessitated by dearth of fertile land for farming. In this case, the lessor is expected to charge rent

commensurate with the size of the land and the lessee is expected to carry keg(s) of palm wine and kola nut and other traditional requirements as an expression of gratitude to the leasor at the end of the farming season especially during bountiful harvest (Mbah, 1997, p. 42). Another marked distinction is that the leasehold is not terminated at the grantor's whim.

There is also Kola tenancy, which is temporal right to land. It is transferred for a gift of kola from the tenant to the grantor. The kola is not a purchase price and the grantor reserves the right to reversion on the death of the kola tenant for cultivating the land. However with the value attached to land in the contemporary Ugbawka and Igbo society, Kola tenant now take the form of showing of land because Kola tenant would be required to farm on the land until death (Mbah, 1997, Dike, 1983). In the proceeding section, I will explore specifically how smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka acquire and access land for farming.

5.4 Method of Land Acquisition by Smallholder Rice Farmers in Ugbawka

The method of land acquisition among smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka varies between farmers, is gendered and reflects a combination of different means, which have been discussed above. According to the research participants, the means of land acquisition include inheritance, family land, borrowing and pledging and a combination of any of them. The participants further noted that men usually acquired ancestral land through inheritance and/or by borrowing and pledge, while women depended mostly on family land, but also on borrowing and pledging. The majority of the female respondents 40% (6) agree that they acquired land for farming through their marital ties and mostly directly from husband or through borrowing, while 33.3% (5) suggested that they acquired land solely through husbands' family land. On the other hand, 13.3% (2) of the female respondents noted that their lands were acquired through borrowing and pledge while the same number of respondents - 13.3% (2) – inherited and borrowed land for farming. Among male respondents, the majority of them, 45% (9) acquired land through inheritance and borrowing, 40% (8) through direct inheritance, 10% (2) by a combination of family and pledged land and 5% (1)

borrowed and pledged. The table below shows the various methods of land acquisition among the respondents:

Sex of respondents and Land Cross tabulation

			Land					
			Inherited	Family/ husband	Borrowing/pledge	Inherited and Borrowing/pledge	Family and Borrowing/Pledge	Total
	Male	Count	8	0	1	9	2	20
		% within	40.0%	.0%	5.0%	45.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	0	5	2	2	6	15
		% within	.0%	33.3%	13.3%	13.3%	40.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	5	3	11	8	35
		% within	22.9%	14.3%	8.6%	31.4%	22.9%	100.0%

Table 3: Sex of respondents and Land Cross tabulation

As the above table illustrates, the concentration of inherited land on males and family and borrowed land on women is a reflection of the cultural practices that bestowed holders' rights to men. The rural institutional arrangement still allowed the right of inheritance to be passed on to male members of the family as holders. Women's access to land is therefore dependent on access to family land. In many cases women's access to land for farming depends on their level of participation in their husbands' farms. Women therefore access land for farming either through family land permissible by the male right holders or through borrowing/pledge from other members of the community. In most cases, women automatically access their husbands' land by virtue of her marital privileges. Women farmers in some cases resort to accessing fragmented portions of land for farming when they are unable to

secure large potion within a particular place. This in effect does not allow for long-term planning for the majority of women respondents because of uncertainty. According to Acati (1983), lack of access to land by women limits their power as small-scale farmers because land is a vital resource not only for their subsistence but also as a form of security for credit and means of access to other opportunities. It also limits women opportunities for diversification to other cash and food crops as a multiple strategy for livelihoods sustenance.

Farmers in Ugbawka are mostly mixed farmers and cultivate various crops but also involve in livestock farming. The major crops are rice, yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, vegetable including economic trees like palm tree, oil bean, breadfruit, timber trees, cashew, mango, orange and banana. However, rice, cassava, yam, maize and vegetables are the dominant crops. The influence of rice is visibly higher than other crops although cassava is also as dominant as rice as a cash crop. The influence and importance of rice was underscored by the award of irrigation projects for rice production by the Federal Government of Nigeria to the tune of N50 million and N100 million for 2009 and 2010 respectively under the federal government rice commercialisation scheme (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2009, Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

Livestock production in the community consists rearing of goats, sheep but also poultry farming mainly chicken and ducks. There are also few small-scale pig farms in Ugbawka but goats and sheep remain the dominant livestock reared by farmers in the community. The Ugbawka community are predominantly Christians and traditionalists and thus rarely have any religious restrictions to eating any meat. Evidence suggests that although farmers in Ugbawka are rarely specialised farmers, they are involved in different types of farming as means of ensuring livelihood sustenance. At the time of conducting this research, livestock farming seemed to be on the decline compared to the period when farmers commanded large herds of livestock in the past.

5.5 Afor Market: The Converging Trading Centre

The market in Ugbawka is called *Afor*, which derives its name from the traditional days of the week in the Igbo calendar. There are four days in Igbo week; *Eke* is the first day, *Orie* the second day, *Afor* the third day and *Nkwo* the fourth day. Each of the days is a market day and in traditional Igbo societies, each day represents important event for a particular community. *Afor* in this case is the third day of the week and the market operates every four days; that is every *Afor* day. *Afor* market is not a specialised market for any merchandise therefore, every food crop, livestock and manufactured goods are available for sale in this market. However, each item has specific allocated space or stall where it is traded. The space allocated for rice coincidentally doubles as the milling centre and where rice grains can be sold and bought. The rice market structure is informal and allows individual decision making on the product and price. I observed that there were no rice market associations or traders' union at the time of conducting this research except for a women's group that specialises in buying paddies from farmers. However, within the informal structure in the rice market, there appeared some obvious structural diversity and hierarchy. Structurally, there were two different groups of persons dealing in rice and rice products. The first is the group of rice sellers comprising primarily of the farmers who brought their paddy rice to the mills and sell them to urban traders. The second structure, which is different from the first, was a group I refer to as local rice traders. The majority of the local rice dealers were women, who specialises in buying unprocessed paddies. This group parboils, mills, processes and sells the rice to the urban traders.

The informal[12] structure of both groups differs from one another. In the first group, the power hierarchy starts with the operators of the different mills, who assumes power informally and maintains order in and around the mills. The mill operators then ensured that market conflicts were avoided as much as possible and that urban traders respected the Ugbawka traders. Furthermore, the mill operators ensure that

[12] Informality here is used to connote activities outside the control of the State.

informal rules were maintained in accordance with the local customs of the people. The researcher also observed that rice sellers reported emerging market issues to the mill operator to resolve and it was noted that he intervened occasionally in arguments that ensued among the rice traders. The customers who bought rice were mostly restaurant owners and hoteliers, middle merchants, school authorities and individual rice consumers. On the contrary, the second group, the rice traders, operated a flat and loose structure with none of them wielding preponderance of power over the others and interactions appeared mutual. Although both men and women conducted their commercial activities in the market, there was a slightly marked difference in the products men sell to that of women. Men sell yam, some livestock like goat, sheep, and game meat while women sell vegetables, oil and livestock like poultry. Both men and women also sell rice but the latter is dominated by women. Men also were the ones selling palm wine. Afor market is crucial for livelihood survival in Ugbawka because it is the point of interaction between smallholders who wanted to sell farm products and city residents who come to buy fresh farm produce at cheaper rates compared to the prices in the city.

There is no price control system in Ugbawka market including in the sale of rice. Each seller sells according to particular need and based on the quality of the product. The price is also influenced by information on availability of 'foreign' rice in the urban markets. Therefore, there is no one common way of determining price in Ugbawka and it often based on the first sale of the day. Prices start high in the morning and gradually decrease in the course of the day. However, farmers sell based primarily on the market information from the cities, the quality and cleanliness of the product (rice was given special attention as the research crop) and most importantly the level of livelihood desperation. Some sellers were noticeably in desperate need to sell than others based on pressing livelihood needs. Also, the mode of sales differs based on whether the farmer is selling non-parboiled rice or already milled and processed rice.

Exchange is done in different ways. While cash is the primary means of exchange, it is not exclusive. Direct observation, which was later confirmed through informal

interview, revealed that, occasionally, farmers and traders engaged in different forms of barter. Some farmers exchanged what they wanted with what they had. As highlighted in the introduction, rice is also cultivated in the neighbouring communities but not at the same level and standard as in Ugbawka, which attracts more urban middlemen/retailers from around the country because of its reputation for producing good and high quality rice. Ugbawka rice is stone and sand free and that makes it the envy of others communities. Therefore, the attraction that Ugbawka brings to urban rice traders makes it the converging point for rice farmers and sellers in and around the community. Unfortunately, some of the rice produced from other communities are not of the same standards and quality as Ugbawka rice. The researcher's direct observation was further corroborated by interviews and interactions with some of the urban rice buyers which revealed that all the rice dealers demanded to know whether the retailers were selling rice which were specifically produced from Ugbawka or not. In such a situation where there are no functional rice traders' union or regulating authority for quality assurance in the rice market, there is a danger that competition between Ugbawka and its neighbours could jeopardise the smallholder farmers' business and especially the trust that the rice dealers have inculcated in Ugbawka rice producers.

However, rice farmers from other communities with low quality rice share a small-designated corner in the market as a way of distinguishing their rice from Ugbawka rice. This informal control mechanism is very efficient. Moreover, Ugbawka rice farmers are also sceptical of the impact the low quality rice from other communities could have on their product. There were few complaints from buyers who were interviewed that there appeared to be confusion sometimes on the quality of rice they bought. According to one of the buyers:

> "*Ugbawka rice farmer must ensure that farmers from neighbouring villages does not confuse us with their rice. We all know that the quality of Ugbawka rice is different from the rest. For us as buyers, it is important that our final buyers from other cities retain confidence in us to deliver good and quality rice to them. We have made this clear to Ugbawka rice*

farmers and we are happy with their approach to ensure clear demarcation"

In order to avoid compromising on the quality of the rice that they wanted to purchase, some buyers would constantly seek verification before they agree and pay for the rice. Moreover, some buyers also relied on informal trust and confidence they built in the farmers because of long history of trading relationships with the farmers. This trust and relationship also stretches to credit purchase and supply of rice. Some rice traders and the farmers had informal agreements that allowed the traders to buy the rice on credit and pay for them much later. Evidence from the interviews revealed that the trading practice has always been part of the Ugbawka smallholder farming with trust being an important element of their commercial interactions.

Figure 2: Afor Market in Ugbawka on a typical market day.

5.6 Demographic Characteristics

Thirty-five respondents were interviewed out of which twenty (20) 57.1% respondents were male and fifteen (15) 42.9% female. The division in the percentage of respondents was purely random and based on the availability of more male respondents than female respondents. Other sources of data such as direct observation and informal interaction compensated for the lower number of women interviewed. Most female rice farmers combined farming and non-paid domestic chores, which rarely allowed them time for other activities. Both male and female respondents engaged in diversified farming and were not specialised farmers. While men were more engaged in cassava and yam production as second and third option crops, women were more involved in cassava, vegetable and maize farming. Notably, cassava is perceived as the most viable food crop that respondents considered staple irrespective of the quantity of harvest from other crops. Cassava serves different food purposes for the household and can be processed to *fufu*, *garri and abacha.*

In Ugbawka, there is no modern farm equipment less for few tractors that are used for clearing of the land and hired from one of the milling centres. Rice farming process from land preparation to harvesting is laborious since it is done manually. It is labour intensive and all the process involved in the chain from landing clearing to broadcasting and/or nursery to harvesting relies upon the labour of the family or hired labour. The source of family labour comes from both men and women and there is an interchange of labour between farm and non-farm activities. A survey carried out early in 1970s in the South Eastern Nigeria showed similar trend in terms of labour participation among households (Lagemann, 1977, p. 81). In order to meet the labour demand, the respondents used family, hired and in some rare cases labour exchange based on reciprocity to meet their farm labour demands.

Labour conditions and sources for smallholder farmers, which are primarily based on family labour, the labour sources for the respondents were obtained through a combination of hired and family labour and labour rotation and exchange based on reciprocity. This was observed among younger respondents between the ages of 20 - 40 and women groups. However, hired labour appears to be on the increase in Ugbawka since the entrance of migrants' labourers into the community and it

constituted the singular most frequent source of labour. Family labour among the smallholder rice farmers was also low because younger men continue to migrate to the capital city. The labour frequency shows that 45.7% of the respondents used a combination of hired and family labour - 37.1% of the respondents stick strictly to hired labour while 8.6% of the respondents use family labour and labour exchange based on reciprocity.

The occurrence of hired labour as the predominant of labour source indicates the changing trend in labour sources in Ugbawka especially for rice farming with high labour demand. Older farmers beyond the age of 40 noted that they could no longer engage in reciprocity labour practice because of their old ages and remarked that it is meant for younger farmers and women. In general, hired labour was very pronounced among smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka and farmers booked in advance prior to farm dates. There was an observed scarcity of labour in Ugbawka given that rural-urban migration was very widespread among the young people. Consequently, the labour gap created by rural urban migration created space and demand for migrant labourers, as well as allowed the take over and control labour by migrants in Ugbawka. It was noted that over 80% of farm labourers in the research context were migrant labourers. Although the phenomenon of labour migration into Ugbawka is a not entirely new, migrants' control of the labour sources became very prominent around 1980s at the peak of rural-urban migration from Ugbawka to the capital city, Enugu (Mbah, 1997). In what follows, I shift my critical attention to how migrant labourers' control labour in the subsequent part of this thesis in Chapter seven.

5.7 Income Sources and Livelihood Diversification

Rice has become the most important staple food in Nigeria (Akpokodje et al., 2001, Akpokodje et al., 2003a) and a cash crop for most farmers. In Ugbawka, the respondents' sources of income ranged from farming, petty trading to other off-farm related activities like rice trading, selling of farm pesticides/herbicides and palm wine tapping. Among the respondents in Ugbawka 62.9% (22) derived their sources of income and livelihood from farming alone, 37.1% (13) derived their incomes and

sources of livelihoods from a combination of farming and other economic activities, some of which are farming related.

Farm activity constituted the most important source of income to smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka while other sources of income were also linked to farming and other off-farm related activities. The researcher observed that most men and women were involved in petty trade. Some of the respondents (men) also engaged in selling pesticides and herbicides to other farmers in their local markets and contract spraying of herbicides in proposed rice farms for others.

Besides farming which constitutes the core of the source of income, female farmers engaged in off-farm activities like, petty trading of food items and other foreign groceries in the local market. All the female respondents attest that women control the processing and marketing of rice. Majority of the female rice farmers were also rice traders who brought in paddies, parboiled, milled and sold to middle merchants at *Afor* market. They also outsourced paddies, processed them, milled and sold them to buyers and retailers from other cities. Some female respondents also engage in labour work to other farmers especially during transplanting and weeding period of the rice season. This diversity in income sources shows clear livelihoods strategy by rural smallholder farmers and reinforces the argument that diversity of income sources is and continues to remain part of life of rural smallholder farmers (Ellis, 2000b, Ellis and Mdoe, 2003).

5.8 Livelihood Differentiation in Ugbawka

This section analyses livelihood classification based on three categories: *rich, average and poor farmers*.

This classification was done only to the primary research participants; the smallholder rice farmers. This classification was also informed by various informal discussions I had with the smallholder rice farmers in collaboration with the research assistants who pointed to the differentiation based on the community classification of rice farmers. Therefore, I used these three classifications to represent how the community

views these farmers and translated it closely to match their classification. Also in the classification, the farmers were asked to classify themselves within these three categories. The categorisation focused on:

a) Individual farmers' production level;

b) Annual income level; and

c) Other sources of livelihoods outside rice farming.

d) Social capital and networks is also an important classification.

The data gathered for this classification revealed that among the 35 respondents 62.9% (22) derived their sources of income and livelihood from farming alone, 37.1% (13) derived their income and source of livelihoods from a combination of farming and non-farming economic activities, such as palm wine tapping and petty trading. This shows that the farm activity constitutes the most important source of income to smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka besides other sources of income linked to farming.

Data on the categorisation reveals that 28% of the respondents are classified as the rich farmers, 52% are classified as average and 20% classified as poor farmers. The classification is also linked to their output from their rice farming, annual income. Farm size was also used to corroborate data for the categorisation of the rice farmers into the three categories. Although there is argument that farm size is not a good criterion for defining smallholders (Kirsten and Van Zyl, 1998), majority of the farmers (77.1%,) who are classified either as rich or average farmers cultivated between 5 or more hectares of land while 22.9% mainly those classified as poor smallholder cultivated below 5 hectares.

Table 4: Livelihood Classification of Farmers in Ugbawka

Category	Factors
Rich farmers	• Diverse source of income beyond farming. These farmers' income

	sources outside Ugbawka such as remittance. • Wide access to support networks • More than 10 hectares of rice farm • Mills more than 100 bags (50kg) of rice per annum - Afford hybrid rice seeds for cultivation • Hire labour extensively • Access to all types of land for farming • Annual income turn over above of around 50,000 USD
Average farmers	• Diverse income source • Limited access to support networks • 5 or more hectares of rice farm • Mills between 50 to 100 bags of rice per annum. Can afford hybrid rice seed • Occasionally hire labourers but also use reciprocal labour and family labour for farming • Access to family land and access to other farm lands- • Annul income turnover of around 25,000 USD
Poor farmers	• Narrow income source mainly

	from farming • Less than 5 hectares • Less than 50 bags of milled rice • Large dependency on family labour and labour reciprocity – in few instances hire labour strategically during farming peak period • Depend largely on family farm • Cannot afford large scale use of hybrid rice seeds • Annual income turnover of less than 15,000 USD

It is recognised that categorisation such as this does not always reflect the entire diversity within the broad groups. However, this categorization provides us with the frame and indication of the different types of smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka.

The rich farmers are those who are expanding and graduating from smallholder rice farmers to become fully commercial rice farmers. This category of farmers annually harvests more than 100 (50kg) bags of processed rice. They cover most of the family expenses from the sales of their rice and also can afford the cost of basic needs of the family such as education and healthcare. In most cases, they hire labourers rather than rely on labour reciprocity. Excerpts from the interview with one of the rich farmers who is considered the richest rice farmer in Ugbawka read below:

> *I prefer to source and hire labourers to do my work and how I want them. I don't want to be tied to labours that I am not sure if I would have the time to return or sending one member of my family to return the labour when we have work to be done in the farm. What I do is that sometimes I call young boys from this village to assist me in farm labour and I will pay them some money and also support some of them in starting small rice farm for them by giving them portions of hybrid rice seeds. I have up to*

ten boys, whom I have helped in that manner, but most importantly, I use migrant labourers for my rice farming[13]

This category of rice farmers also reinvests and focuses on expanding their rice farm towards full commercialisation. They also have other sources of livelihoods from livestock farming. One of the farmers confirmed that he has other sources of income in an interview.

> *Apart from my rice farm, I also have sheep and goat, which I can sell, in the market to solve any family problem. I am also the manager of the milling centre and I make money from there and while I report to the owner of the mill. I also serve as the focal point for some traders from the cities that are looking for agents and middlemen for their farm products.*

The above category used both their social and financial assets creatively for improving their living conditions and in some cases draw from external influence to improve their farming conditions. They also had access to credit and most of them had established bank accounts with banks in the capital city. What emerged from the data is that this category of smallholder rice farmers had varied sources of incomes beyond the sale of rice and had developed strategy for individual access to farm support mechanisms like credit, access to farm input, supplies directly to users like hotels, schools and restaurants. Informal interaction with selected farmers in this category revealed that they identified themselves as rich. Their direct choice of word was "*I am very comfortable*". One of the farmers outlined some of his achievement as a smallholder rice farmer as a way of confirming his richness and highlighted that all his children go through good schools to university level. It could be argued that the first category of small holder farmers had an advantage of all available avenues and possessed the capabilities to expand available economic opportunities and social capital to advance their livelihood (Bhandari, 2013).

Linked to this group is how their livelihood status also supports the exercise of their agency. Most of the farmers in this category have participated in an external

[13] The farmer cannot be named due to ethical consideration and the farmer's request for anonymity

facilitated smallholder collective action. They often have voice in the community and use their social networks and political capital for individual advantage. They are able to draw on the political and strategic agency in their relationship with other farmers. Evidence also shows that their outward reception to externally facilitated smallholder collective action put them in most cases in contradiction to embedded cultural practices of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. For instance, a particular farmer might be willing and ready to put up his house as collateral, which the other farmers are unable to accept as this as a conditionality. Acceptance of some of the conditions from external facilitators or banks puts him against group interest and resolution but guarantees access to needed credit for farming. Evidence also suggests that such disagreements amongst the farmers on what is and should be acceptable in their relationship with external facilitators and support are the reason for poor functioning (or lack thereof) of the farmers' association. It has been argued that social capital can lead to voice and group accountability if properly channelled but could also lead to isolation or forcefully individualisation without regard for group interest when an individual ignores older social capital links in favour of individual benefits or opportunity (Hudson, 2009).

The middle group identified in this research, as the "average farmers" is generally that category of smallholder rice farmers who coped and in some instances and strived to ensure that they stay at the level above the line. This category also possessed diverse income sources, cultivated more than 5 hectares of rice farm and milled around 50 to 100 bags of rice per annum. They also sourced for labour from family as well as from organised labourers but also engaged in labour reciprocity. In terms of land, they used mostly family land but also took land on lease for cultivation based on the farm harvest of the previous seasons. Like the first category, this group also attempted to diversify their income sources outside farm activities but also cultivated different types of cash crops as a means of spreading their chances of better harvest and incomes after sales. These also included working class families who were also involved in rice farming as an alternative source of income to the family. In terms of exercise of their agency, these farmers strive for duality in maintaining their link

between external and internal forms of collective action. They use both personal and everyday agency but also exhibit their political and strategic agency when necessary. They are not overtly confrontational to embedded social norms but ensure balance. However, they are very sceptical about externally facilitated form of smallholder collective action. In some cases, they balance the interaction between other farmers and external facilitators through their balanced voices and opinion of issues. They are not as individually focused as the rich farmers but ensure that there is a balance in their action while maintaining the trust with the community and other farmers. Trust and reciprocal relationship still embodies their action.

At the lower echelon of the categorisation are the poor farmers. The poor group generally had access to land and also depended largely on farm produce as the core source of income. Interview with some of the farmers in this group revealed that they occasionally obtained support from one or two members of the family who lived in the city. Their source of labour for the rice farm was entirely on family labour and labour reciprocity. Access to hired migrant labourers is based on strategic decision during peak period. Most of them in this group rarely used hybrid seeds but occasionally got rice seeds on credit from sellers and agreed to pay from the output after harvest. They were not too inclined to risks like the other higher groups. The farmers in this group constitute a minority of the smallholder rice farmers. Analysis from this group revealed that they use rice farming as a strategy for upward the social mobility. Some of them moved from cultivating other crops to rice as a cash crop. These farmers categorised themselves as poor. However, they hold that poverty is not permanent state but a transient one. This group of farmers depends largely on community networks and rely mainly on their everyday and personal agency. Their level of interaction with external forms of smallholder collective action is low because of their strong attachment to cultural and social embedded practices.

The categorisation of the different groups of the smallholder rice farmers forms the baseline for understanding smallholder farmers and how they exercise their individual agency. What is clear from the groups is that while the ‘rich farmers had diversified

sources of income, they also possessed greater capability to access other livelihood options and choices. The 'average farmers' also attempted to strike a balance between evolving closer to the rich farmers and enduring signs of struggle, which could push them backwards towards the poor group. The poor farmers on the other hand focused their strategy and capacity towards lifting themselves from the lowest group to something much higher. They engaged in other economic activities within their reach that could generate means of household survival (Ellis, 2000a). However like many poor categories, they often struggled to substitute assets for another as a way of alternating livelihood strategy due to lack of diversity of sources and capacity (Reardon and Vosti, 1995).

5.9 Institutional Agents of Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka

The start of what could be identified as major development changes in Ugbawka dates back to the colonial period and gradually evolved and stagnated from the early post-colonial period to the contemporary era. Within these periods, different institutions shaped and more often continues to shape smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. Some of these are discussed below.

5.9.1 The Family System

The family system is an important institution of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. Ugbawka has a close-knit family system that respects the communal way of life and derives from immediate and extended family system. The noticeable forms of collective action, which take the family system route during all the periods, are labour cooperation and reciprocity, collective farming system whereby different farmers establish rice farms in a particular settlement for collective security and for fending off birds. Extended families are set up to establish farming settlements where different nuclear families organise their farming cooperatively and collectively. Family farm settlement system is also based on trust because there are from the same extended family system. In addition, collective action was also shaped and based on the level of respect and trust a particular family command in the community. The community open family system ensures that information about any particular family

traits and behaviour are known across the community and one could simple assert and trust another based on family lineage (Mbah, 1997).

The significance of family in smallholder collective action is particularly visible in labour cooperation and reciprocity. Empirical data reveals that some families cooperate and act collectively in labour based on family history, while others avoid collective action for the same reason. Therefore, family as an institution forms one of the major arenas of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka, but could alter collective action. Family feuds of past years are capable of obstructing smallholder collective action structured around family system and can potentially pose problems of mistrust among farmers who are part of the collective action platform (Mbah, 1997). This claim is supported by one of the farmers who did not join a particular group remarks:

> *I am not going to join that group. Mr A (name withheld) is part of that group and that makes it impossible for me to join. My father advised me to avoid his family. His father cheated my farmer in the past and his family cannot be trusted. Those joining his group are taking a big risk but I cannot stop them. All I can do it to avoid his group and form my own group*[14]*.*

5.9.2 Religious Institutions

One of the forerunners of colonialism was the deconstruction of Igbo traditional religion and its replacement with Christianity. The proximity of Ugbawka to the capital city Enugu makes it an offshoot of many churches and Christian denominations. In short, different churches and denominations constitute different identities for different peoples in Ugbawka. Smallholder rice farmers also identify and organise collectively along denominational lines. Smallholder collective action along this line of identity mainly focuses their efforts on using the church and their denominations as a link to external sources of support. This is because most of the missionary churches are believed to

[14] I avoided the use of names in this quote on research ethics based on anonymity.

have ties to charity or not-for-profit organisations, which could attract both financial and non-financial input for the benefit of the farmers. The churches are also socially embedded as part of the community and play an important role in shaping behaviours of the people. Within the churches, there are different intra-denominational groups like bible study, women's league, Legion of Mary etc. through which collective action are constructed and nurtured.

Membership of any of the churches is open to everyone in the community. The researcher noted that the influence of the church on the community is strong and their preaching reinforces the farmers' main objective of prosperity. The churches and denominations attract different set of people from the community including farmers. Ironically, some of the farmers who were also members of the different church and denominational groups were also very much tied to their cultural beliefs and repertories, which was what the churches preached as the bane of their poor state of affairs. This duality of identity in the churches and cultural norms could be explained by the fact that smallholder farmers viewed the churches as alternative sources of livelihoods and not a place for spiritual awakening. Thus organising collectively along denominational lines was almost, if not entirely, motivated by the search for support including financial and technical input through religious capital as an alternative source of livelihood asset. One of the farmers remarked that:

> *I was told that there is opportunity for me to join the group and have access to fertilizer and I joined. I contributed small amount and received fertilizer, which helped my rice grow better in return. So I am happy.*

Therefore, the brief analysis reveals that the religious groups in Ugbawka paid attention to the social needs of the people albeit based on membership and commitment to the programme of the church especially when there was no standard yardstick for measuring acceptance of the preaching by the members. However, the churches offered more than a congregational place for believers but also offered access to capital and other assets required by farmers. As Toner's research in Uchira, Tanzania revealed, churches offer access to networks of influence that reach far beyond the

village (Toner, 2008a, p. 144). Green (2006), equally argued that religion functions in fluidity and adapt to context in which individual needs are served, while Heilman and Kaiser (2002) pointed to the influence of religion in the mobilisation of individuals and groups to serve both individual interest and religious interest. This interaction between individual and religion serves and provides platform for development of the society (Haynes, 2007).

5.9.3 Village Council and Associations

Another key institution of collective action in Ugbawka is the village council. The pre-colonial Igbo political system has the village council as the highest decision making body in the community and, to this date, has evolved and played different roles while adapting flexibly to the changing government and governance systems of the post–colonial Nigeria. The Igbo village council is akin to an open democratic system whereby interested members of the community come to submit their views without restriction and votes on specific issues are collected generally from attendance. Although the contemporary assemblage of the village council differs significantly from the pre-colonial period, the Ugbawka village council still retains the democratic structure of the pre-colonial period. The council of elders continues to be the highest alternative although there are checks and balances from the age grades and the *Umu Adas*. Umu Ada is the council of the first female born of all the families in the community. In Ugbawka, this group still meets to discuss societal development issues in the community. Another set of group that complements and acts, as check on the council of elders, is the August Women Association. August women association in Ugbawka and many Igbo society is a group of women from a particular community, who return to the village from the urban centres to assess, evaluate and deliberate on development programme in the community. They make annual contribution to any new project and in many cases start up development projects like water project or education project in the community.

The village council holds the responsibility of making binding decisions for the village and can reward and sanction a member of the village accordingly. They play multiple

roles from interceding on behalf of the village to initiating community projects and in maintaining law and order in the community. The village council in many instances acts as the bridge between the village and the local government.

The local government is the authorized government that supposedly should act to enforce general law and order in the local council area but the village council in most cases perform that role. However, in some instances there are conflicts between the local government and the village council especially on local tax system and on market fee rates. As in other villages in Tanzania (Ellis and Mdoe, 2003), local taxes are viewed as burdensome in Ugbawka due to the perceived lack of transparency by the local government. The empirical data obtained from informal interview reveals that since the local government were unable to improve market conditions with the taxes, the village did not feel obliged to hand over the taxes to the local government rather, they attested that taxes managed by the village council had in the past become more effective in improving market and rural conditions than the taxes paid to local government. Most cases of conflict over market taxes were resolved between the village council and the local government through an agreement that ensured that the village council retained certain percentage of the taxes for market improvement and security of the market. The village council leaders are not paid for their services but take on this responsibility on a voluntary basis and also based on the Igbo belief in altruism and development (Onyeiwu, 1997).

The village council also functioned with the support of the women associations and groups, which included the UmuAdas, age grade and other women associations like religious or transitional groups. Historically, Igbo women are known to play active role in socio-economic arena of the community as well as participate in political decision-making processes including decisions on the processes and procedures of allocating resources and developing and building new initiatives (Chuku, 2005, Falola and Paddock, 2011, Matera et al., 2013). The various women groups played active role in the village governance as council members, by offering advice and provision of checks and balances to the council and in some cases by providing alternative paths to some

major village projects. It is perceived that the women's organizations' collective action function very effectively and the village council always consulted them for advice on development projects. Interviews with selected members of the Ugbawka council revealed that decisions that were made with the involvement of women always fared better than decisions made without the involvement of women. Also, projects initiated and ran by women groups have shown to have very high completion rates.

Women groups and associations have always been an important part of collective action in the Igbo society. During the pre-colonial Igbo society, women asserted their considerable social agency by frequently organising themselves collectively and making useful contributions to community development and discourse. The women associations also resorted to different tactics and methods whenever the community often controlled by men encroached into their terrain. Such tactics can be in the form of exposing their naked body in what is traditionally referred to in Igbo society as women's war or use of the feminine power solely by virtue of being women (Carwile, 2007). The power of organisation of Igbo women in the colonial period was demonstrated against the colonial administrators in 1929 in what is historically and erroneously called the Aba women riot (Chuku, 2005). However what transpired in 1929 was a form of collective action through social resistance when Igbo women in South Eastern Nigeria discovered the colonial administration attempts to impose tax on women and their livestock; a practice which was culturally abominable and abhorrent at that period (Falola and Paddock, 2011).

Overtime, the consistent unity and associational benefits of women institutions in Ugbawka has made women associations' viable avenue for formulating and engaging in collective action. Evidence from the fieldwork reveals that one of such associations through which collective action can function is the women rice farmers and the Isusu group, which is discussed in Chapter six. Although they are not formally registered as associations of women rice farmers, the activities of the women groups support the functioning of smallholder collective action. As highlighted in the previous section on labour, hired labour constituted the major source of labour for rice farms in Ugbawka,

however in order to meet their labour requirement especially within a restricted system where women had limited capital to pay for the cost of migrant labourers, the women farmers provided support to each other through reciprocal labour exchange in a rotatory manner. Evidence from data showed that labour reciprocity was higher among younger farmers and women smallholder rice farmers than among men of older age. This is because the women farmers' assemblage provided the space for women to access and engage in labour reciprocity, as well as other forms of labour exchange based on rotation.

Women also carved out opportunities for collective action through other means and avenues created by their groups. There were pockets of women meeting groups in the community through which women smallholder rice farmers could access credit facilities for their farm activities like the Isusu group. These meeting groups were not specific and restricted to smallholder rice farmers but to all other women farmers. Within these groups, each woman contributed a certain amount of money weekly or monthly that is given to each member on rotatory basis but also could be lent to any member of the group as a soft loan for general use. The functioning of this system is based on rules of honesty, trust and need. According to the members of the women groups, access to the group contribution was rotational although there were exceptional cases where some members could be provided with credit facilities on emergencies

Asides from village governance and local government, there was active presence and agency of other powerful actors (with vested interests) in the research space with significant socio-economic and political influence in the community. This is what is generally refer to as "politically exposed persons". I use this term to mean anyone who holds and has held any political position at the local government but is also a member of the community. There are a number of such people in Ugbawka who see themselves as wielding more influence than the village council although they unsuccessfully attempted to constitute an alternative and influential voice to the village council. The research findings revealed that a few of these groups were also

rice farmers that wield political capital in Ugbawka. More on this will be examined further in chapter seven on the Politicization of Collective Action.

Through these various channels and structures discussed above, the village council acts and receives major support from members of the community and performs various functions, some of which support collective action for the entire village and specifically for the rice farmers. For smallholder rice farmers, the village council plays a crucial role in mediating between the farmers and migrant labourers. A detailed examination of how labour gangsterism functions in creating collective action in the research has been given due consideration in Chapter seven.

Thus it can be argued that institutions through which smallholder collective action function in Ugbawka differs in form and role. However, what is clear is that institutions that shaped smallholder collective action in Ugbawka evolved and remained part of current institutional arrangement in one way or the other. These institutions allow for modification and/or reformation of its usage in serving the interest of the smallholders. It has been argued that smallholder relationship with the market is that which allows for maximum flexibility, fluidity and autonomy where external relations are ordered to allow for contraction and expansion at moments deemed appropriate – entrapment is avoided as much as possible (Van Der Plog, 2008). Therefore for smallholders in Ugbawka, their relations with the market, market agencies, institutions, political authorities and other external orders are constructed, maintained and changes according to local cultural repertoires that centres on issues of (dis) trust and often translated into the construction of autonomy (Perez, 2005).

The age grade is another group in Ugbawka through which smallholder collective action is reflected. Age grades are informal groups formed by people within the same age brackets, usually from three to five years from each other. It is important in Igbo society for one to know his or her age mates because that is whom he or she will be measured against and they are also living samples of self-evaluation in Igbo

societies[15]. For the males, it is a confirmation that you have acquired the status of manhood and, as such, you are expected to participate and contribute to community development especially in collective labour (Okodo, 2012).

In Ugbawka, the age grade is an important institution for collective action. It was observed that various age grades met in the community square to share drink as a form of social bonding and to discuss community progress and development. They also organised for collective farming and in some instances the younger grades constituted bulk of the labour sources. It has been argued that age grade is that institution through which the Igbos decide to co-operated for work, to war and to govern their society (Ifemesia, 1979). Evidence from the field through direct observation, informal interview and semi structured interviews reveals that age grade is still an important institution in Ugbawka. Different grades still organized among themselves for different activities and the younger grades form themselves into labour group for interested farmers. Furthermore, the empirical data revealed that labour cooperation based on reciprocity is high among the younger smallholder rice farmers were structured around the various age grades. Each age grade bracket organised and agreed on how to support each other including the process and terms of exchange. A further interrogation of the institution of age grade and smallholder collective action revealed that some grade also organised as temporary labour groups and worked for the older and 'rich' rice farmers in the community. It is through the age grade system that women often challenge masculinity in the Igbo society by taking upon responsibilities that are considered manly and excelling in those tasks and responsibilities (Amadiume, 1987, Ọgbalụ, 1979, Akhter, 2002, Reynolds, 2001).

[15] The age grade system as a socio-cultural institution emerged in recent times to facilitate development in the community. Communities are segmented in different age grades, and with time, the younger groups ascend the ladder and take over leadership role from the older grades or generations. Thus age grade is a process of preparation and grooming young men and women to community leadership in a collective manner. Age grades of opposite sexes often compete in community development and achievement. It is through the age grade system that women often challenge masculinity in the Igbo society by taking upon responsibilities that are considered manly and excelling in those tasks and responsibilities

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explore the profile of Ugbawka as a community and the different institutions that provide governance through which collective action take place. Those institutions also constitute the agents of change in Ugbawka through which different individuals exercise their agency in their daily struggles for survival and social becoming. Along the way, the role of the church, village governance, and family system were examined.

This chapter also examined the profile and characteristics of the rice farmer, with particular focus on their differential income sources, labour and access to land. It further looked at the livelihood levels in Ugbawka and the capacity of the different groups to activate their livelihood choices through multiple strategies. The chapter revealed that although livelihood choices exist, individual capabilities to access those choices differs based on availability of different livelihood assets but also ability to access the assets.

This chapter shows the role of social factors and realities in collective action and the nested nature of institutions of collective action, smallholders are capable of organizing and mobilising for acceptance and resistance depending on the course of action. It is important to note that the analysis underlines that changes and development is shaped at the village level through the interaction between the actors and the environment as captured by critical scholars (Arce and Long, 2003, Arce, 2003, Cleaver, 2007).

One of the main aims of this thesis is to deepen an understanding that smallholder collective action can be shaped and motivated economically and non-economically and that both formal and informal institutions can co-exist and play important roles in shaping smallholder collective action at various levels and forms in the community. This complicates any simplistic formal/informal dichotomy in the literature. The mainstream institutional theory on collective action argues for the formalisation and designed institutionalisation of collective action to avert free riding (Olson, 2009),

while the critical theorists reminded us of the need for a more nuanced perspective that takes into account the socio-cultural and political context that recognises economic imperatives (Ostrom, 1990, Cleaver, 2007). The next chapter of this thesis, explores informal and formal collective action practices in Ugbawka while examining the success and otherwise of their different forms of smallholder collective action.

Chapter Six:

6.0 Formal Versus Informal Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka

6.1 Introduction

Mainstream policy and practice on smallholder collective action has recently focused on creating a formal system where institutions are designed to control individual members' behaviour in order to ensure accountability, respect for the rules, understanding of roles, but importantly to ensure that rewards and sanction which follow each end of the behavioural and responsibility pattern are symmetrically applied. The tendency to design smallholder collective action along this line is high with many international development projects on smallholder collective action currently designed along this line with case studies depicting success stories. For instance, Oxfam international's market system approach to value chain development shows case studies of successful mainstream smallholder collective action projects in different developing countries (King et al., 2012, Wilson et al., 2011a, Jochnick, 2012, Gayathri, 2011, Baden, 2013a, Gavin, 2013, Baden, 2013b)[16]. However most of these projects on smallholder collective action by Oxfam are funded by the private sectors with vested interest in particular line of products.

The data from this ethnographic research suggests that smallholder collective action cannot be realized only through the design elements. More often than not, formal and informal institutions complement and challenge each other. The primary data from the field also showed that, practically, both formal and informal forces shape the outcomes of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka.

The chapter explores the interaction and the functioning of informal smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. It borrows and aligns itself closely with the critical institutionalism thinking to show the powerful nature of informal institution in lubricating smallholder collective action through successful informal collective action

[16] More on Oxfam smallholder collective action programme can be read on EDP at http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/private-sector-markets/enterprise-development

cases. Critical Institutionalists (CI) argue that institutions normally elude design that evolves in the dynamic process of social life (Franks and Cleaver, 2007, Cleaver, 2007, Cleaver, 2012). Critical Institutionalists also contend that mechanisms for local governance that facilitate collective action at the local level are enacted through complex mixes of bureaucratic and socially embedded institutions (Benjaminsen and Lund, 2002, Lund, 2006). Rules, boundaries and processes are fuzzy and peoples' complex identities and unequal power relationships are unlikely to be subjected to institutional design.

After exploring the evolution of collective action in Ugbawka, the chapter proceeds to examine some informal collective action cases in Ugbawka. Within this section, the Chapter briefly examines the mix between formal institutions and informal systems. I argue that what is perceived as informal and abnormal by mainstream view might actually be the means through which smallholders survive in the local community. Moreover, it is in the realm of the informal that local power and political interplay are embedded and enacted.

This chapter demonstrates further that smallholder collective action is not rigidly implied to formal institutional design and that their motivation for organising is not only economic but also involves non-economic incentives. In examining the cases of formal and informal collective action, the chapter explores how social embedded forces confront established formal structures through the routine exercise of agency.

6.2 Origin of Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka

In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe articulates how individuals in Igbo society strive for the development of the community and how the community also emboldens individuals for greater advancement (Achebe, 1958). Such a society was democratically communal as individuals are allowed basic freedom for the good of the community and where individual success translates to community success. It portrays the role of the different structures of the Igbo traditional system in society. The political structure of the precolonial Igbo was very democratic and akin to the

Greek city-state where power derived directly from the people. The sense of political community in Igbo allows direct and indirect representation through the village council, council of elders, women groups and the age grade. Socially, the Igbos are communally interlinked in the extended family system that promotes and advocates for support and cooperation. Achebe also highlights how colonialism distorted social coherence between the individual and their society (Kenalemang, 2013). The community cherished the core elements of communal living through forms of reciprocity, trust and communal living, which defined the Igbo society. Nowhere are these elements of Igbo society more visible than in farming and related communal activities.

Smallholder collective action in Ugbawka originated from a long tradition in farming. Farmers worked as collectives in different ways during farming seasons to support each other and to contribute to development initiatives. In order to trace the origin of collective action in Ugbawka among smallholder rice farmers, I asked selected farmers questions about the origin of collective and how collective action has evolved in Ugbawka. The responses from the farmers triggered further interviews with elders in the community who are viewed as repository of knowledge and wisdom in the community. The responses were also triangulated with scarce documented evidence on the origin of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. The responses from four farmers and an elder are captured in the box below.

Box: Responses on the Origin of Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka

Origin of Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka[17]

SHF1: I am not sure I would be able to trace how collective action started in this community. I guess it has always been part of this society.

SHF2: I guess this is a difficult question that I cannot answer- I think you should talk to one of the elders- one of them should be able to assist. However, I think it is how we live in this community.

[17] SHF used to abbreviate Smallholder farmer.

SHF3: You might have to look back hundreds of years to know how it started. Some of us grew up and continued this cooperation way. Our ancestors pass this down.

SHF4: This is as old as any of us here in the community. Collective action was passed down from our forefathers. This is how they supported each other during farming seasons and survived before white people came to Nigeria. It used to be much better but government involvement in our life as well as farming has made things a bit difficult. You don't know whom to trust anymore but we still manage to work with each other but I work only with people I can trust.

Elder[18]: You will have to trace collective action in this community to hundreds of years back. When I was small my father used to prepare us for farming and my uncles and my cousins used to come to our farm as well as to also help us during any of the farming activities. We work together and eat together during and after the farm. My father and my uncles and extended family always plan how to work together in the farm, whose farm will be cultivated on which day and how each of the farm will be cultivated until all the farms for my uncles are all done. We also cooperate in other off farm activities like clearing of village square and common areas and support each other during funeral planning. We also join other members of the community in clearing the market and also in community road construction and clearing of the pathway. Everyone is aware of the days for market clearing, road construction and other things. Also in the evening before the workday, the town crier will go around with the gong to announce the activity and encourage everyone to come and on time.

Box 1: Responses from farmers and elder.

Evidence suggests that smallholder collective action in Ugbawka is embedded in the culture of Ugbawka people. Moreover, the Igbo society derives collective action from its social cultural practices embodied in the community daily activities and reflected in farming. There is also a consensus that collective action is an important aspect of Ugbawka farming that is passed on from one generation to the other. All respondents did not view smallholder collective action as something new but as an inherent and embedded part of Ugbawka. Evidence also indicates that collective action in Ugbawka predates colonialism, and transcends economic motives. The community is motivated by desire to cooperate with others as a way of life rather than to gain economic benefit.

[18] Elder name withheld is 89 years.

Despite the disparity in the conceptual assumptions of the factors that motivate collective action (from economic to social and political), the smallholder farmers had a clear understanding of collective action and suggested that its origin could be traced to the pre-colonial period. Further discussion with the farmers revealed that while they accepted that some smallholder collective action is triggered by the desire to access economic opportunities and benefits, they also observed that viability of social factors are important motivational factors that trigger collective action amongst the farmers. A comprehensive life history interview with elders also confirmed the understanding and origin of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. The elders presented examples of smallholder collective action in the precolonial period and articulated how it has been sustained and adapted through history. In his book, the *History of Ugbawka: Pre-colonial Times to the Present,* Mbah (1997) argues, rightly so, that collective action and communal living are engrained in Ugbawka and most visible in farming.

On the position of the farmers on the dual nature of motivation for smallholder collective action, Cleaver (2007) contends that while it is important to recognise the theoretical viewpoint that espouses economic factors as the trigger for collective action, such theories are limited in their modelling of the social, historical and political formation in drawing the link between individual agency and collective action. As one farmer noted:

> *Many things could motivate me to participate in collective action and my participation is dependent on certain factors. Potential economic gains are possible to motivate me to part of collective action but that must be with people that I can trust and these people who I can trust are people that I can easily identify with and know their character and what they are capable of doing based on previous history of engagement with them or their family*[19].

[19] Interview with a male smallholder farmer, on 19 June 2010

6.3 Successful Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka

Smallholder collective action in Ugbawka is mediated through different social institutions such as village councils, council of elders, age grade, family and *Umu Ada* (women group). These social institutions are mechanisms through which individual smallholders access their social capital and also tap into functional and reliable collective action (Rahman et al., 2015).

Informal smallholder collective action in Ugbawka functions through embedded social interactions and institutions. Institutions such as the women farmers and women rice traders are examples of collective action that operate within the informal spaces, while maintaining a functional effectiveness for the interest of the members in Ugbawka. This research found examples of such informal smallholder collective action in Ugbawka.

6.3.1 Women Collective Action Associations

Women groups and associations have always been an important part of collective action in the Igbo society. As highlighted and argued in Chapter five, during the pre-colonial Igbo society, women popularly organised themselves collectively and contributed to the community development and discourse. Several studies are available on how women's institutions form the basis for collective action in communities (Baden, 2013a, Abdulwahid, 2006). A number of factors related to poverty, gender inequality, and poor implementation of legislation and public policy can limit women's ability to engage in and benefit from trade. Poor access to resources, lack of skills and market knowledge and poor connection to the buyers equally limit women's ability to properly access the market (Jones et al., 2012). Local context and complexities, negative attitude towards women, gender relation in communities and associated customs/practices are some of the factors that inhibit women's participation in activities outside homes (Elson, 1999, Moser, 1989).

Despite the restrictions that women face in accessing and utilizing market opportunities, the changing family and responsibility landscape that demands more

from women has created new space for women to participate in the new market opportunities through collective action. Overtime, the consistent unity and associational benefits of women's institutions in Ugbawka has made women's associations' viable avenue for formulating and engaging in collective action. Evidence from the fieldwork reveals that one such association through which collective action can function is the Isusu group and women rice farmers and paddy trader group.

6.3.2 The Isusu Group

In Chapter four, I highlighted the practice of Isusu in the pre-colonial Igbo societies and the way in which it has adapted and advanced from the pre-currency period to the modern period. Isusu or Osusu as the Igbo calls is a savings and credit union, insurance scheme or a saving group, or club. It is a fund to which a group of individuals make fixed contributions at fixed intervals; the total amount contributed by the entire group is assigned to each of the members in rotation (Bascom, 1952). This practice was well advanced prior to colonialism and was recognised by the colonial administration as an effective means of building credit unions and cooperatives in the then Eastern Region[20]. In recognition of Isusu system the Eastern Region Cooperative Department (1954) stated in its annual report in 1954 that:

> *"The Isusu (Esusu, Susu, Osusu) is a widespread indigenous system of thrift and credit… On the whole, the Esusu seems to be fairly well managed; although in some areas… the Isusu has degenerated into a notorious money-lender-controlled 'racket'. There are vast numbers of Isusu Clubs in the region and the total amount of money involved must be very large. Some local Government Bodies have recently instituted a system of registration of Isusu Clubs" (Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1954).*

[20] The Eastern Region during the colonial period represent the present South East and South-South Region which is where we have the Igbos.

Isusu is much more prevalent among women for financial support for members who ordinarily could not afford the amount they receive from the group. Membership is usually among 20 to 30 people from the same social background with a shared cultural bond. Members make weekly contributions that will accumulate into a lump sum, which will be given to one member at every point in time in a pre-agreed continuous sequence. A small committee usually manages the group, which in most cases include a president and a secretary who keep the records. The group also engages in labour reciprocity and support to members during burial and funeral. Apart from the rotational sharing of contributions, any member who is in need can also request for his/her turn to be brought forward within the understanding of the other members based on the spirit of trust and reciprocity (Ben-Yami, 2000). The codes and agreement binding the group are usually informal, verbal, unwritten but in most cases respected.

In Ugbawka, the Women Isusu groups are one of the successful smallholder collective action group which I examined in this research. Members of these groups are also rice farmers but also greatly involved in rice trading and marketing. This group comprised of 22 members and all 15 of the female rice farmers interviewed are members. These meeting groups were not specific and restricted to smallholder rice farmers but to all other women farmers. Membership is based on common understanding and on the need for mutual financial and social support. There is no formal registration process whereby forms are filled, vetted and reference demanded before membership is granted. However, membership for this group of women is based on informal connections and social ties. Discussions with individual members revealed that, when a new person wants to join the group, it is done through informal process where any old member introduces a new member. This is followed by the presentation of kola and palm wine by the new entrant to the group for initiation as symbolic gesture of respect, integrity and openness. Therefore, acceptance to this group is not based on fulfilment of formally laid down procedures and process or by agreeing to a formal code and guiding principle but based on tacit understanding and

knowledge of the new member's character through informal structures and historical association within the community.

Contribution for the Isusu group is biweekly and very minimal. This was to ensure that members are able and capable of making their individual contribution without putting too much strain on other family responsibilities. Members are allowed but not bound to make one off monthly contribution. Informal discussions with selected members revealed that collection of contribution follows agreed process and are given to members turn by turn. However, there were instances of deviation from the agreed chain of the collective whereby certain members requested for special contribution and for their collective to be brought forward. One of such instance was the case of bereavement in the household of one of the members and the second of such case was request by a widow for her collective to be brought forward to enable her to pay for school fees of her children. In both instances, members agreed to both requests and allowed both women to get their wish as a show of support to the predicament. I also conducted further interview into why such request was accepted despite pre-agreed collection sequence. Few members of the group explained that the group's core principles are rooted on support to each other and that if they cannot help each other in terms of needs, then the core objective of the group is defeated. Although, their time has not come, their condition and situation deserved urgent attention. Denying the two women their request would have sent a message of individualism and selfishness which belies the core vision of the group.

These two examples explain the Critical Institutionalist argument that decision making and negotiations in smallholder collective action are embedded in everyday life, shaped by history and politics (Cleaver, 2007). The decision to allow for early collection for the two women was based on role social structures and power dynamics play in shaping relationships. The community norms and the recognition of the overall objective of the group above and beyond individual selfish needs allowed for the recognition of informal trust within the group. Under the Mainstream Institutionalist perspective, the two women would have been asked to wait until their next turn or be

asked to look for other loan agencies. However, the Isusu system recognised that rules and regulations are made for human beings and that individual members must feel a sense of group support. In other words, collection is not necessarily 'turn by turn' (a sequential western logic of justice), but based on the urgency of needs – more like a fraternity. This highlights the African philosophy of 'Ubuntu' where the logic is "I am in community, therefore I exist" rather than the Western Individualistic Cartesian logic of "I think, therefore I am." So in this case, the "we" is given pride of place over the "I."

Members also favour the group against the external NGO-led formal smallholder collective action. Respondents noted that such system could support NGOs and government agents facilitating smallholder collective action rather than attempting to create a new system that people would find hard to trust. There are three other Isusu groups in the community between different smallholder farmers that perform well and strengthen bonds based on informal ties, trust and a sense of reciprocity. She continued by hinting that the Isusu system has been practiced in the community for years and that the smallholders have faith and trust in the system. However, if a member defaulted out of greed, it will be left for the community to determine, but so far there have not been any case to take to community level.

In Igbo society, such default will normally be settled within the group unless the defaulter refuses to oblige to the group conditions. Cases like this are not taken as criminal but civil and the community expect the group to resolve it. If the case persists without resolution, the *umunna* (extended family) of the group members are expected to prevail on the defaulter to find a way of abiding by the rules of the group. If the disputant continues to ignore the decision, the case expands to community level and the higher in level it goes the risk of ostracization becomes increasingly likely for the disputant (Okereafoezeke, 2003). Although the female respondent noted that chances of a member defaulting is low due to the support mechanism that discourages default, it also shows the strength of cultural practices and how it can support and discourage free-riding. According to most of the members, the membership of the Ugbawka Isusu

group has facilitated an avenue to seek both financial and social support. All members interviewed agree that they share a common understanding, which reduces risk of default and that the effective functioning of the group is rooted in trust and the fact that there is a social and cultural connection shared among members.

One of the additional benefits which members expressed is that through the Isusu group, information and opportunities that come to one person automatically comes to the rest. One of the members provided an example of how farm inputs were bought collectively for all members using contribution from the group at a cheaper rate than it would have costed them individually.

6.3.3 Women Rice Farmers and Paddy Traders Group

The second successful smallholder collective action group examined in this research is the women rice farmers and paddy trader group. This is a group of women who combines rice farming with rice paddy trading. These women organise themselves under the association of women rice traders and have made collective action work for the group. The idea for coming together as a group was to share common benefits and negotiate risks together. This idea aligns with the principles of both formal and informal smallholder collective action as argued by both mainstream and critical institutionalists (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a, Olivier de Sardan, 2005).

Membership is voluntary, unrestricted and open to all women rice farmers and paddy traders in Ugbawka. New membership is also based on recommendation from an old member although one key requirement is that the prospective member must be a rice farmer and paddy trader. The underlying rationale for the group is both economic and social. Data from interview with members of the group reveals that the initial rationale was to collectively share decision making on their relationship with middle traders from the city, to seek collective avenue to secure rice seed, to access input collectively at a reduced rate, to guard against exploitation from paddy seller as well as city buyers and to socially support each other. Information exchange was also identified as an important factor in the formation of the group. A certain member

asserted that some of the members have access to information on input, seeds and even other sources of support that could help others. Hence, "*in joining forces, we are able to share this information as well use our collective spirit to achieve better living condition for our family*"[21]. She also argued that it has increased their visibility in the market and that through their group, they have gain more recognition and respect from men. This rationale and underlying motive identified by this group is closely related to case studies of other female smallholder collective action group across many developing countries. Oxfam documented cases of how Women-only groups enable effective participation and collective benefit in Ethiopia and Mali (Oxfam, 2013, Baden, 2013b, Gavin, 2013).

Some of the members of the group noted that their membership in the group serves them better than a formal smallholder collective action facilitated by external actors. A number of reasons were adduced. Firstly, it was indicated that, most of the members are not involved in too much competition with each other because of the sense of collective spirit and unity. Although each member sold their rice and controlled their chain of customers from the city, there is nonetheless group support to members who are unable to sell their product quickly. One of the members gave example of how one member who sells to a secondary school in the city supports the other members to sell their product to her chains. In her word, "*each time the school come to buy rice from Mrs Agu, she will inform all us and ask if we would like to bring our rice when the school arrive because she will not have enough rice for the school. This makes it easy for all of us because beside selling it to one school and quickly, we do not engage in price bargain individually with the school, once the price is agreed on the quality and quality of the rice, all members who brought their rice for the school will receive the same price, which is normally higher than what an individual member sells to an individual buyer*"[22].

[21] Interview with a member of women rice farmers and paddy trader group in Ugbawka. Interview conducted in June 2010 at Afor market Ugbawka.
[22] Interview conducted with a member of the women rice and paddy traders in Ugbawka in June 2010 at Afor Market.

Unlike the mainstream formal form of smallholder collective action, trust as a human element is an important factor in the success of the women group. This is particularly so because of years of government neglect and failure to follow up on its agricultural development polices. According to Lyon and Porter (2009), trust is central to trading networks both locally and around the world, more so in areas such as Ugbawka where there is a limited history of reliable state regulation, which is the case throughout much of West Africa where informal trading and collective action is still very prevalent (Lyon, 2000; Holtzman et al., 1988). In Ugbawka, trust plays substantial role in engendering the participation of members of the group in participating fully and reciprocating to each other. Evidence through interview and informal focus group meetings revealed that the success of the group can be put down to their ability of the groups to build trust and respect each other. It was also recorded that the collectiveness of the women group has increased their leadership roles in the community.

Another important benefit associated with the group according to member is the sense of shared power and responsibility. The operational structure of the group is loose and flat with no leader that commands and dictates how the group is or should be run. The running of the group is structured around all members based on equal power and contribution. Such flat structure according members foster strong and positive group dynamics which allowed the collective objective to flourish. One of the members expressed a sense of power and confirmed that the group dynamic is such that it allows all members to feel a sense of belonging and also allows them the space to contribute to the group. She further noted that the structure equally empowers all members to reach out and seek support that will be beneficial to all members knowing fully that any idea and/or support emanating from each member will be discussed and analysed to ensure that it will benefit all members. This freedom to express oneself and to feel a sense of power and belonging is one of the key sustaining factor of the women group. According to Sen (2001) denial of power and access to power restrict ones capacity and capability to function fully and effectively in a manner that allows for full expression of one’s agency.

Rules governing the association are unwritten but are well known and understood by members. These rules are common rules that apply to everyday life of the Ugbawka people and which became transferred into the women group. It hinges mainly on trust and collective support anchored on the spirit of reciprocity. The protection of the interest of the group is also paramount to the members as a way of showing commitment. Another important benefit identified by the group, which unlike the formal designed smallholder collective action, is the less pressure on adherence to rules and the complications associated with the formal process. For the women, the rules are part of their everyday life and not based on imported or invented actions. Most of the dos and don'ts derive from what is culturally accepted as code of behaviour in the society without any extra effort to obey. This is also based on the understanding that each member knows and is expected to obey the rule without any form of reminder.

Some of the common unwritten rules include cooperation and participation in activities of the group, adherence to the group paddy trading rules, which stipulates that members cannot engage in bidding war at the same time with each other. Members must allow each other to conclude negotiation with potential paddy seller before beginning negotiation on the same. Members are also not allowed to undercut each other with customers from the city. Once it is established that a particular buyer from the city is interested in a member, the others must respect such allegiance and must not attempt to sway the customer away toward them.

The two examples of successful informal smallholder collective action were necessitated because of the deep rooted level of trust among the members and the fact that power was diffused allowing members to feel a sense of belonging. Trust interacts with power and conditions of domination and subordination do not lend themselves readily to trust. However, in some cases where the formal structures of a relationship, for example a commission-agent or broker dealing with a smallholder farmer indicate a disparity of power, nonetheless, institutional power is mediated by

the web of social relationships that are rooted in traditions and norms (Lyon and Porter, 2009). The currency of these relationships is the trust that is gained through shared understandings. Behaviour on the part of the formal institution that disrupted or damaged the informal system would be detrimental to both (Lyon and Porter, 2009). Chapter four stated clearly the role of trust in Igbo society and how *Ofo* mediates and brings about trust among members of a community. It has been argued that personal trust is the key to making markets work at the lower end of the trade hierarchy (Clark, 1994, pp. 228-34; Chalfin, 2004, pp. 225-52).

In societies like Ugbawka that lack comprehensive market structures and weak government institutions, markets are inherently uncertain and personal relationships anchored on trust help to reduce the uncertainty. These relationships encourage reliable behaviour on both sides by creating a desire to reciprocate and by offering the threat of the sanctions controlled by the other party. For example, malfeasance in a transaction with one party might lead to a loss of business with that person's entire network of kin and neighbours.

Trust is also an important factor in determining participation and engagement in collective action projects, as the lack of faith in an institution will make it difficult for individuals to participate (Lyon and Porter, 2009). For example, the regulatory agencies in Nigeria, particularly in the food sector, are generally perceived as corrupt and untrustworthy - these institutions are also seen as lacking the ability to enforce agreements with any reliability (Mustapha and Meagher, 2000). As a result, smallholder farmers would instead pursue other, non-state forms of collective action that are regulated through personal relations and other institutions like trade associations. According to Bandiera et al. (2005b), lack of trust could lead to non-participation and resistance to the institution by the individuals.

A female respondent who is part of an Isusu group noted that such system could support NGOs and government agents facilitating smallholder collective action rather than attempting to create a new system that people would find hard to trust. She

informed me that, there are other Isusu groups in the community between different smallholder farmers and further investigation revealed additional three groups that perform well and are bonded in their way of managing the group[23]. The same level of trust and confidence cannot be said of the formal smallholder collective action initiated and managed by government institutions or agencies. Below, I examined two projects; the SONGHAI Enugu Initiations and the FADAMA project to demonstrate how formal smallholder collective action with all forms and element of mainstream design principles could fail to achieve desired result due to the non-recognition of the social embedded factors.

6.4 The SONGHAI Enugu Initiative

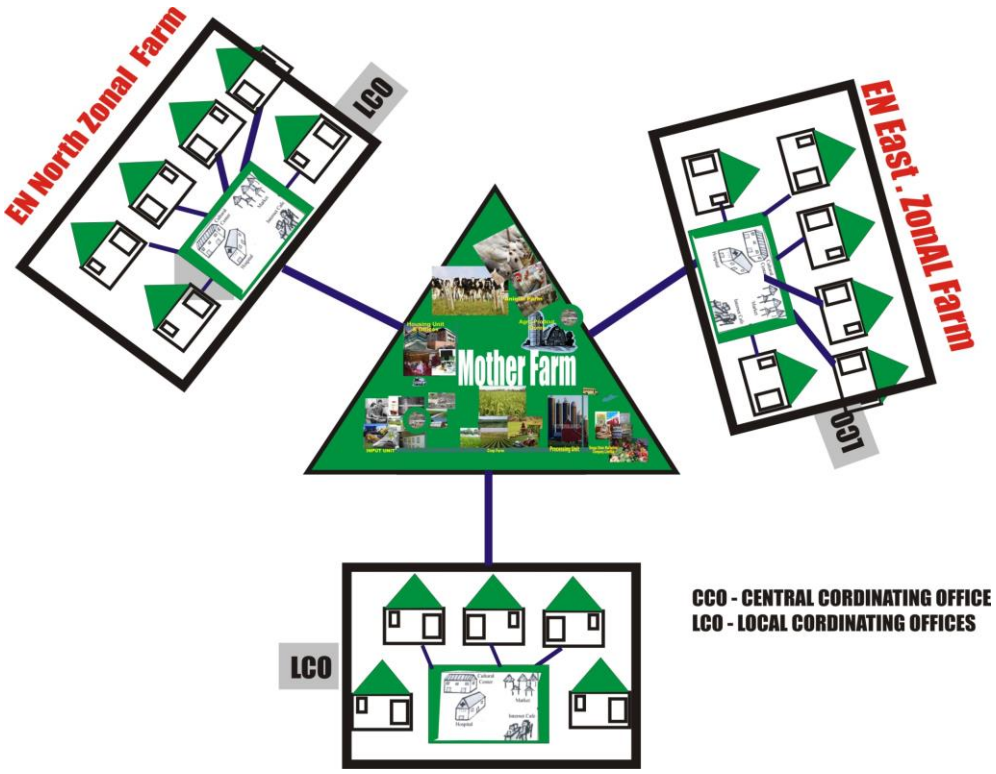
The SONGHAI Enugu Initiative (SEI) is an initiative of the state government aimed at building young entrepreneur farmers in Enugu state through collective action by forming farmers' cooperatives and unions to facilitate the process of linking them up to market opportunities, and accessing credit, inputs and other incentives that could boost productivity as well as create market space for the SONGHAI farmers.

The SEI is a borrowed framework from the SONGHAI centre of the Benin Republic and was designed as a partnership between FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), working in partnership with the Songhai Centre, an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) based in Benin(Ife, 2013, Ife, 2010). SONGHAI was designed an integrated farming approach with a zero waste policy where all farm inputs and other logistics are organized in such a way that farmers have one primary delivery-point for all farming facilities. This particular model adopts a holistic approach to agribusiness and entrepreneurship development, which involves training its graduates, provision of support services and linkage to credit and markets through networking (Ife, 2013, p. 15). It is a sustainable model with integrated

[23] Interview with a member of the women group in June 2010

development of primary, secondary and tertiary production of food crops, horticultural crops, aqua-culture and animal husbandry (Ife, 2010). In an effort to reposition the state as an agricultural export state, Enugu state adopted the SONGHAI model as a way of empowering and encouraging youth into farming and broadly into agriculture. While the SONGHAI in the Republic of Benin is purely an agribusiness centre, the Enugu prototype was designed in principle to generate greater agricultural productivity for the state.

The state through the Ministry of Agriculture created twenty-one (21) SONGHAI prototype centres in Enugu state otherwise known as the “green cities” that consisted of 1 state level farm centre, 3 senatorial farm centres (one for each senatorial zone) and 17 local centres for each local government area in the state. Each of the local government had a local coordinating office. Also, three local governments out of the 17 had two farmers because their local council was selected to host the farm for the senatorial zone (see figure below). The State SONGHAI Centre was proposed to be located at Heneke Lake in Obinofia, Ezeagu local government area (Ife, 2013, p. 16). Each local government was to have a local coordinating office that will be responsible for manager the farmers and ensure a function smallholder collective action through the SONGHAI structure.



Lifted from the Enugu State SONGHAI Programme Design Document

The initiative based on the project design was expected to achieve an annual turnover of N10million and a return on investment for the private sector at 20 percent annually (Ibid). The rationale for the state was that agriculture through young people would increase state productivity and diversity revenue from one based on oil to one based on agriculture. In an interview with a senior member of the state government executive on their rationale for the project and the choice of farmer across the state in all the local government councils, viability of their decisions and sustainability plan from the government, he noted that:

> *The government felt the need to bring back its agricultural base, which was the corner stone of Enugu since the Okpala regime. We carried out a study and SONGHAI initiative appealed to us. We think it is an innovative way of combining business and agriculture but also a way of empowering smallholder farmers in the state… the reason why we are establishing centres across the 17 Local Councils is to ensure inclusivity and give all the local councils the same opportunity to re-establish them as agricultural*

base of the state. In term of sustainability, it is assumed that, these farmers are going to be self-sufficient; we are approaching this from a business angle and not from state social service angle[24]*.*

Structurally, the SEI was design to function through collective action in a way that would support the sharing of cost, risk and opportunities by the farmers based on agreed rules and procedures. On paper SEI was viewed as a model for agricultural development through smallholder collective action in Nigeria. The original plan was for the state through the SEI train 170 smallholder farmers and graduates who are working or interested in small-scale commercialised agriculture. The 170 farmers and graduates was to be selected from the 17 local governments on equal basis for the initial start off of the initiative and upon return from training from the Republic of Benin settle in this various local communities as farmers within the SONGHAI structure. In collaboration with the World Bank, the State Government was to provide soft loans and grants to the farmers as well as build the infrastructure required for the full functioning of the farms(Ife, 2013). It was expected that private sector will partner the State government and other partners like the World Bank in the initial start-up cost. The proposition was private sector investment will be recouped through access to the collective product of all the farmers in a consistent and formal manner. Different roles were earmarked for different stakeholders. For example, the SONGHAI Centre, which is a private enterprise was to facilitate and during the data collection period facilitated training of 170 farmers. The Centre was also to provide support for the establishment and running of the Enugu State Centre of excellence that was to provide technical assistance, development of agribusiness and entrepreneurship skills, capacity for young farmers and women. The role of the Enugu State Government as the public sector partner was to implement the agribusiness enterprise development programme based on the SONGHAI model; offer lands, assets to the farmers, create the smallholder collective action group, create incentive for further private sector investment and stimulate capital investment through other off-farm projects. Despite the comprehensive formal design of the SONGHAI project and the consideration it gave to both public and private sector involvement as well as linkage with rural

[24] Interview with a senior state government official from Enugu State, held on 17 May 2010.

smallholder farmers through collective action, the real implementation tells a different story. As part of my research data collection methodology and immersion process to gain entry access to institutional data within the Ministry of Agriculture of the State, I volunteered as an intern to the state government and was seconded to the ministry of agriculture to support the operationalisation of the SONGHAI project as well as in the implementation of the Commercial Agricultural Development Programme (CADP)[25]. I had the opportunity to informally interview most of the selected farmers and the empirical data revealed that the formalisation of smallholder collective action through design does not automatically result to effective functioning of the collective action group.

The selection of the farmers from the different local government to become part of the SONGHAI structure was conducted to satisfy political interests. Some of the participating trainees who are supposed to be farmers are merely political supporters of different political elites. These trainees have no interest whatsoever in farming but agreed to join the training in order to receive financial benefits from travelling and participating in the training that was conducted in Republic of Benin. The trainees also barely know each other and most of them have never and planned not to engage in any form of farming. One of the factors that facilitate smallholder collective action is the group character and uniqueness (Gyau et al., 2014), but the selection of trainees who were never farmers does not appear to foster an atmosphere of collective action.

As the structure demanded, each local government will host a local coordinating office close to the farmers to be able to coordinate collective action functioning for the farmers. However, the decision on the location of the local coordinating office was again not based on proximity to the farmers but based on interest from the local government chairperson whose interest was to locate the office in order to benefit his political accessories. The interest of the farmers was not considered in the decision to locate the local coordinating offices. In an interview with one of the top executives of

[25] For more on CADP please visit http://www.cadpnigeria.org/

the government whose name and position remained anonymous[26], it was revealed that, focusing "merely" on agricultural potential of a community as the condition for the SONGHAI site would be politically incorrect and suicidal for the governor who will be seeking re-election[27]. He further revealed that, it was important to ensure that the various political interest holders in the state were in agreement on where the sites would be located irrespective of whether the community had agricultural potential or not.

In essence, the SONGHAI structure was created in line with mainstream design principles whereby formal processes and institutions were respected and consulted, but the actual implementation was hijacked from the rural smallholders and deviated entirely from the plan.

In terms of membership of the collective action group, the few farmers who received training as part of the group retreated to their original caucuses in the rural areas because the association functionality of the SONGHAI group was non-existent. This example reinforces the critical viewpoint that designing rules and regulations for a formalised smallholder collective action is not the panacea but the understanding of the actors and the context in which the collective action takes place (Cleaver, 2007). The expert design of the SEI project based on institutional thinking was not enough to adequately deal with the political interests and determination of the project.

The Ministry of Agriculture whose primary responsibility is agricultural development had little to do with the selection and the identification of the farmers. The political determinism overshadowed project implementation and the application of the design principles. The young trainees whose interest lie away from agriculture could not continue with the project upon their return from Republic of Benin. As the time of the data collection, the state government was struggling and had side stepped the project. The outcome of such politicisation of agricultural project in favour of political interest was the eventual marginalisation of the smallholders in favour of political elites. Responses from the prospective farmers interviewed confirmed that most of

[26] Due to anonymity, I would not be able to reveal the exact position of the top government official but this person ranks 1-4 in the hierarchy of the state government.

[27] Data was collected in 2010, one year before the Nigerian general elections in 2011

them were never interested in becoming farmers but were only selected to join the farmers training as an avenue to gain some temporal income as unemployed youths[28]. The participants also revealed that, their selection through the local politicians was in response of their support during elections. According to one participant:

> *There was no formal selection process of finding out whether we had interest in agriculture or not nor was there specific criteria to ascertain our farming credential. The cooperatives and the unions were already part of the ministry of agriculture structure and we were mainly selected to fill the spot. No single member of the opposition party was selected to be part of the SONGHAI initiative[29].*

The second formal smallholder collective action project examined in this research is the FADAMA project. The development of the third National FADAMA Development (FADAMA III) Project for Nigeria was to sustainably increase the incomes of FADAMA users. This followed the acclaimed success of FADAMA I from 1992 to 1999 aimed at improving infrastructure services for private sector development; rural services, infrastructure and administrative and civil service reform (World Bank, 2000) and FADAMA II from 2003 to 2009 that set its objective to ensure the participation and empowerment of rural smallholders as well as to ensure progressive rural policies, institutional stability services and infrastructure at the rural level (World Bank, 2010a). The FADAMA III project was tailored along FADAMA II and focused on achieving smallholder participation and civic engagement in agricultural development; improve rural service and infrastructure[30]. A key component of the FADAMA III project was its loan and credit scheme to rural smallholder farmers through cooperative societies and rural farmers' union. Cooperative societies and union are examples of formal smallholder collective action structure and have been touted by mainstream thinkers

[28] I met up with 70 participants when they returned from Benin Republic in May 2010 and also in August 2010 during a workshop on smallholder collective action. I had the opportunity of interacting with majority of them informally in a three days' workshop specifically to find out if they intended to be farmers or if they saw it as an alternative opportunity to make quick money as unemployed youths.
[29] Interview with a respondent from a smallholder group from Ugbawka, on 23 May 2010.
[30] http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P096572

as ways to ensure successful collective action for smallholder producers of cash and exportable crops (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a)

The administrative structure of FADAMA moves chronologically from the federal to the state and to the rural level through the local government councils. At the state level are the State FADAMA Development Office (SFDO); State FADAMA Technical Committee (SFTC); Local FADAMA Desk (LFD); and the FADAMA Community Association (FCA)(World Bank, 2010a). The status of FADAMA as a collaborative project between the government and the World Bank entitled the government as the key decision-maker on the day-to-day basis including the recruitment of project staff at the state and local level (World Bank, 2008, World Bank, 2010b). This research investigated the recruitment of the Local FADAMA Desk Officers and the decision-making at the local government level and further examined the functional operations of the cooperative system under FADAMA

Evidence reveals that both the recruitment of the Local FADAMA Desk Officer and the decision making on project support was not in line with the FADAMA project design which recommended the deep consultation with smallholder farmers groups in the decision making process to ensure participation and complete buy in. Enugu State has seventeen (17) Local Government Areas (LGAs), which in effect means that 17 Local Desk Officer were to be selected for each LGA in consultation with the smallholder farmers who are members of the FADAMA project group.

Rather than consult with the smallholder groups, the 17 local desk officers were appointed through consultation with the Commissioner for Agriculture and the local government chairpersons. Their appointment was a reward to local political support during the electioneering period and consultations were never held with the smallholder and neither was the vacancies advertised for interested and qualified individuals to apply.

In an informal interview, twelve (12) out of the seventeen (17) local desk officers confirmed that the local government chairperson appointed them as desk officers and they acknowledged that they had no previous experience in facilitating smallholder collective action on managing or working with cooperatives or union. They also confirmed that they played a significant role for the party at the various local areas during the last election. The desk offices also confirmed that in order to keep their job, their continued allegiance to the chairperson is imperative.

In term of the operations of the loan scheme, which is a key component of the FADAMA 111, the research examined further how the loan schemes were determined and the ease of access for the farmers. The local desk officers further that the decisions to grant individual farmers credit facility was rarely based on the smallholder farmer's potential to expand and develop progressively but purely on political and party allegiance. In short, the majority of the beneficiaries were not full time smallholder farmers but other persons that exploited their political capital to access credit and invest them mainly in other non-farm related businesses.

Despite the design approach which conformed to the mainstream perspective of whereby decision making are negotiations and agreed, the FADAMA decision making is hijacked with no consultation with the smallholder farmers. Decision on the management of the project was taken by government whereby political interest is put before the interest of the smallholders. There was no sense of collective action and the farmers hold no form of trust on the project. In some instances, most of the support also went to ward councillors that used their political positions to attract support for themselves individually. Many Ugbawka farmers interviewed were very sceptical of the FADAMA project and argued that they cannot participate in the project because of its political over-determination.

Further interaction with smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka about the viability and functionality of the government facilitated smallholder collective action through the SONGHAI initiative and FADAMA revealed a very distasteful narrative of how both projects were used as means of political rewards and not genuinely targeted at

smallholder farmers. All interview smallholder confirmed that initial attempt to group themselves into cooperatives during the early period of the start of FADAMA in 1999 was not welcomed by the government. The government in turn constituted FADAMA group in Ugbawka based on political interest and more recently, the SONGHAI initiative also failed because it was also structured for political purposes. There were also claims by some farmers that their initial contribution toward FADAMA cooperative has not been returned. They accused the politicians of investing their contribution for private gains. At the early start of the project, farmers were encouraged to form contributory cooperatives that would collectively operate an account to qualify them for the FADAMA credit scheme. However, farmers became increasingly dissatisfied with the longer tenure of maturation of the credit and requested that their various contributions be returned. All farmer interviewed confirmed they are yet to receive their contributions back.

Though all factors identified by mainstream institutional perspective on structuring smallholder collective action like rules, roles, characteristics of the smallholders, the type of crop were in place in both the SONGHAI and FADAMA projects, it still did not facilitate an effective and functional smallholder collective action. This implies that focusing on the formal and institutional structure of smallholder collective action without paying attention to the deeper socio-political and power interplay risk overlooking the important element of smallholder collective action in rural community. Factors such as trust, power sharing, participatory decision making, cultural codes are important in facilitating smallholder collective action (Cleaver, 2007). Despite the overwhelming data on ineffectiveness of smallholder collective action in both the SONGHAI and FADAMA, the project reports suggested otherwise. This is mainly due to the inability of the project evaluators to critically examine the functionality of the smallholder collective action under both projects and the over reliance on the technical and managerial details which place emphasis on ticking the box and not on real impact. For example, report shows that loans were given to smallholder farmers and that these loans yielded returns. However, this research found that smallholder

farmers were not able to access the loans, rather individual businesses in nonfarm related activities accessed and benefitted from the loans.

The manifestations of the smallholder farmers' action are linked to their social life including their interaction with non-local entities and/or government. As smallholder rice farmers attempt to function as a collective action unit, their actions manifest their strong belief in their social ways of life. Also, the proximity smallholder farmers in Ugbawka to the State Capital (Enugu) provides them with more advantages over other rural farmers in terms of access to externally facilitated smallholder collective action with NGOs and other donor funded smallholder initiatives. However, I observed that the motivation to participate in externally facilitated smallholder collective action is low compared to motivation for collective action initiated and nurtured within Ugbawka. I interviewed selected smallholder rice farmers (male and female) in order to identify the reasons for the low motivation in externally initiated and facilitated smallholder collective action projects. The key question sought to establish why there has been low participation of the smallholder farmers in externally funded smallholder collective action. The viewpoints of the smallholders were very critical of government, donors and few selected local smallholder farmers from Ugbawka whom they perceived to follow divisive project by donors against local initiatives. Some of the farmers (whose names will remain anonymous) were also believed to wield better political capital than other farmers. One of the respondents remarked that:

> *Government is only interested in supporting externally driven smallholder collective action but not in supporting "us" within our means to organise ourselves very well and produce more. They* [the government] *are doing so, because they don't have our interest at heart. The NGOs are not any better, they come here to tell us what to do rather than listen to understand our concerns and how we want things to work for us- anyway, they have succeeded in taking some of our few farmers with them- those are the people who are connected to government and you understand what it means to have government connection in our society. In short, we*

think they only want to use us as a means to get more money from whoever is giving them money for these projects

The respondent further noted that external development partners such as NGOs and the World Bank project usually come into the community with assumptions of how smallholders should organise themselves for collective action, the benefits of forming an association and the potential link to bigger market and more profits. But smallholder farmers in Ugbawka appear unconvincing with the prospects arguing that most of the externally facilitated or government donor partnership projects are very divisive, unsustainable and disruptive of systems which have worked for the community in Ugbawka for several years. One of the respondents cited FADAMA and SONGHAI as example of such mainstream smallholder collective project and initiative that lacked local buy in and hence failed to succeed. Cases of financial contributions made to FADAMA project for loans and other assistance which they were yet to access for the past 5 years are part of such examples of erosion of trust. Many of the respondents noted that the majority of smallholders in Ugbawka were keen to ensure that community sense of belonging was maintained in a way that communal support, trust and mutual reciprocity was maintained. However, they expressed concerns that such cultural attributes that bind the community together might be eroding gradually due to the influence of government and other external NGOs who do not appreciate their way of life.

The research also attempted to uncover the perceptions of NGOs based on the low motivation of smallholders from Ugbawka to participate in collective action projects facilitated by them. A respondent from one of the NGOs who pledged anonymity confirmed that they were aware of the concerns of the farmers which hinged of the inability of government and NGOs to include smallholders in the design of the project and the high expectations most development projects expect from smallholder farmers without due consideration to their technical knowhow, cultural background and most importantly their priorities. According the respondent,

There are just too much standards, rules and regulations that "we" expect from the farmers. However, there is absolutely nothing we can do about it

because of the nature of the funding, which is streamlined and designed to achieve certain outcomes. We have to report in a way that would allow us secure further funding. But I can tell you that the farmers are also aware and they don't take us serious any longer. Most attend our workshop and seminars just to get one or two-day's per-diem[31].

The importance of the above summation and reference to social realities by the respondents indicate that informal form of smallholder collective is not a misnomer or an abnormality to the rule. However, it shows that smallholder collective action should be designed to serve the farmers and not the other way round. This also limits the mainstream argument that reinforces designed formal structures, rules and regulation as the panacea to smallholder collective action, while recognising that informal realities must be respected in smallholder collective action. Social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, individual creativity are as much factors to facilitation smallholder collective action as information, incentives, rules, sanctions and repeated interactions (Cleaver, 2007). As discussed in chapter four, Trust and sense of reciprocity are important factors that stimulate and lubricate smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. That was lacking in the two case studies of SONGHAI and FADAMA 111 discussed above. Some of the farmers also expressed their view on externally facilitated smallholder collective action.

Box 2: Responses on Externally facilitated Smallholder Collective Action

Emmanuel Okechukwu – Male – 54

Of course we very much like support if they come genuinely- right now, we are very careful about support from any agent of government or the NGOs. Last time, it was Fadama project that came here and fooled many of us. It has not done anything for us. The Catholic church is supporting their members with loan through Rev Fr. Mike Chukwuma but they not ask them to put down land or other things as collaterals. After season, they pay back to the church and if you have bad harvest and unable to pay, everyone will know and you will be given more time in the next

[31] Interview with an NGO respondent working in Ugbawka, on 24 May 2010

farming season or two to pay back. For the NGOs and the banks that support or work with them, they used to tell us that, they need collateral because that is the only way they can get their money back if we have bad harvest. This means they rejoice in our bad fortune and use us to make or save their money. Their interest was never to support us.

Rita Nwoye – Female-50

Every one of us is interested in support from government or NGOs but it has to be genuine support that does not attempt to create a complete new system for us. They have to recognise that, we have been cultivating this rice and supporting each other for several years. Any support or help coming from government or NGO should be to help us and not to help government or the NGOs. For now, that is what we think they are doing.

***Ani Emmanuel** – Male – 40*

The past government (Chimaroke's regime) promised to build a rice mill for us but up till now, we have not seen anything. They requested community collective support and effort and asked us to volunteer land for the mill, which we did. Government should be coming to ask us questions about our challenges. We have councillors, local government chairman and other representatives who are supposed to ask and know our plight but they don't do so because they are now part of government. They have made several unkept promises and we are tired of people coming here to deceive us.

***Donatus Ogbu – Male** – 60*

Government has neglected us completely. Although some people are posing and accepting some support, which we don't know, where they are getting it. They know who they are in the community and one day their sins will find them out. People come here trying to make us think they know us better than we know ourselves- the NGOs.

The responses indicate that, Ugbawka smallholder farmers are not averse to externally facilitated smallholder collective action. However, their concern hinges on the inability of external facilitators to recognise local realities and specificities. For

instance, one of the farmers remarked that, they are not asking to be given financial support for free. They only wanted the external facilitators to recognise that many farmers cannot afford the nature of the collaterals they are asking or hand over the sale of their rice to the external facilitators. When I asked why they couldn't allow the external facilitators to sell their rice, in return for financial support or loan, he gestured a sign of lack of trust and the fact that, many farmers are used to their way and manner they sell their rice to meet their livelihood needs. They know the quantity to sell and the quantity to keep at different periods of the year in order to meet divergent family responsibilities which are also spread across the year. These are important dimensions that external agents cannot understand. Also, the issue of collateral is one, which many of the smallholder farmers found difficult. The reason is that they are scared that if they have bad harvest, they will have to forfeit their collateral.

However, if it is through the church or through an "Isusu[32]", the community or the church is able to know that a particular smallholder had bad harvest and these are clear because everyone would know. When such a situation occurs, farmers expect to be supported instead of being vindicated through taking their property away in order to recover money. There should be mitigation measures to support the farmer to be able to farm again and pay the money in next harvest period or two-harvest periods. There are provisions that the informal less designed smallholder collective action affords the Ugbawka rice farmers, which the formal system cannot afford them.

Although, mainstream perspective on smallholder collective action often considers the realm of the informal as disorder and an exception to the rule, evidences suggest the contrary. Analysing local smallholder collective action especially in rural Africa is best placed within the realm of historical precedents of what have worked and what have not worked, how it has worked and what is required to strengthen what has worked rather than rejecting a system based on the presumption that they are informal. It requires accepting and analysing the informal systems and viewing their actions as an

[32] Definition and discussions on Isusu are covered in Chapter four.

act of initiative and creativity, which could be adapted and utilised in shaping collective action future initiatives.

Evidence from Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers suggest that it is in accepting the informal socio-cultural and political activities that we would be able to critically analyse and recommend a hybrid approach that would integrate formal requirements with informal imperatives. Critical thinking such as Nuijten (1992a) argues for a shift in the way of thinking towards what social scientists call informal, (dis) order in the analysis and discourse of local setting. Labelling blurs our understanding of the dynamics of organisational practices and the role of different actors involved in collective action at the rural setting such as Ugbawka. Attempts should be at understanding the meaning the actors acquire for different purposes and how meaning and actions could be configured to support smallholder collective action. Schaffer (1986) argues that labelling people as "*resourceless"* and dependent says more about the discourse of morality used by the researcher than about the dynamic of the activities and as a result can stigmatise people and reduce their capacity to be more creative within their given and acceptable social setting. In her research on informal networks in Aba, in Abia State, Nigeria, Meagher argues for a blend of formal and informal structures in collective action especially in the era of globalisation where the weakening of the state has made the informal economy so pervasive and intertwined with formal economic structure (Meagher, 2010). Meagher's viewpoint resonates with the views expressed by the smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka that NGOs and Government agents that facilitate smallholder collective action should consider and utilise their experience as farmers and their understanding of the local context as community members when designing collective action projects. Importantly, the experiences and local knowledge of the smallholder farmers should be valued and not considered lower in sociological pecking order compared to the experience of external facilitators. In short, smallholders perceive that they are exercising legitimate agency within their environment when dealing with external actors(Chabal, 2009a).

A key argument of the Critical Institutionalism and specifically Cleaver (2012) on her analysis of Collective Action using the Institutional Bricolage framework which this thesis adopted is that the formal and informal sectors need each other to survive (Chabal, 2009a). Informal institutions promote good governance in localities where formal democratic and bureaucratic institutions are weak (Xu and Yao, 2015). In other words, informal setting is not the preserve of those labelled as poor or marginalised but attracts people who are assumed to be deeply engrossed in the formal structure. Therefore, the functioning of formal collection action in Ugbawka requires prior recognition of the existing and functional informal structures that would support in the further examination of the micro informalities that transpire in the daily interaction by the smallholders. It is important to recognise that informal community structures are not static but adaptive and evolving with changing pattern of socio-economic and political alterations. According to Tria Kerkvliet (2009) rural smallholders do not accept the status quo but rather harbour alternative visions, value and beliefs on how resources should be produced, distributed and used. They continuously interact with systems; formal and informal to survive. As highlighted earlier in this Chapter smallholders in Nigeria and the area of study had for long been neglected and exploited by government and external alike. This persistent complaint breed mistrust between the government. In several instances as discussed under FADAMA and SONGHAI smallholder farmers often suffer from agro-input sabotage, financial misappropriation and exclusion from their affairs by government and other external facilitators of smallholder collective action initiatives. In fact, most of the agro rural development policies from the federal government are implemented without the consultation of rural smallholders. Therefore, to understand the nature and type of relationship between the smallholders and the formal systems and structures I had to interview farmers as well as officials from the government Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs.

Responses from both sides suggest that there is interest for the gap between the formal and informal systems and structures to be bridged. NGOs officer interviewed identified a number of issues which could assist them work with smallholder farmers

in Ugbawka better. Record book of association members, proof of togetherness (bonding) and other necessary documents would help NGOs and donor funded projects link up with smallholder groups. On the other side, the farmers remarked that recognition of already functional system; respect for cultural model of monitoring, evaluation and support as well as inclusive approach could engender collaboration and strengthen trust between the smallholders and external agents and facilitators. Farmers are always reluctant of NGOs and government supervisory visit, which they argue, take their reasonable time without commensurate result. They do not trust NGOs and government to be dedicated to the rigour of development a functional smallholder collective action that is sustainable and community driven. From the NGOs perspective, although they recognise the frustrations of the smallholder farmers especially in view of years of consistent failure by the government, they argue that smallholders are also not giving too much chance for an externally facilitated collective action. That also is the frustration of the NGOs, which to them hinders the opening of the space for collaborative approach to smallholder collective action in Ugbawka.

In trying to substantiate the need for NGOs and government to recognise an already existing working system and structure, one of the female smallholder farmers who also engages in rice trading narrated the function of “Isusu” among selected women smallholder in Ugbawka as an important system which has served and continue to support the female group members from precolonial period to the present day Ugbawka.

6.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have discussed the origin and sources of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka as well as the theoretical framework for understanding the social and cultural aspects of collective action. A large part of smallholder collective action involves the workings of institutions, which contribute to or support this action, although in some circumstances, these institutions can be a focal point of resistance and contestation. As this chapter has shown, institutional collective action can have

the unintended consequence of actually limiting and de-motivating smallholders. This chapter reviewed how formal institutions interact with existing community and other informal systems. The analysis extended to the challenges of externally facilitated smallholder collective action and recognises that there can be a balance between what formal, structures expect and what informal systems expect.

The Chapter begins with a look at the historical embeddedness of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka where it argues that smallholder collective action in Ugbawka is linked to the Igbo traditional way of life based on trust and reciprocity and anchored on the sense of community which prevailed in the pre-colonial period. This Chapter recognises that the role of informal systems and culture are a powerful force in shaping the understandings and behaviours of individuals and groups and offer significant insights into collective action because it does not view agency as a purely individual concept (Cleaver, 2007). This section emphasized the importance of understanding culture, including symbols and sense-making practices, and its role in shaping and being shaped by social organization and institutions. Using cultural theories to understand smallholder collective action in Ugbawka helps to balance against the assumption of rational choice that dominates the institutional approach. Drawing culture into the analysis brings in concepts like norms, relationships, and traditions and allows the researcher to gain a fuller understanding of the way that formal institutions could work in communities.

The Chapter then moved on to discuss how individual agency is exercised in collective action through different institutions and examined which type of farmer participates in what form of smallholder collective action. It also explores some shades and spheres of smallholder collective action before dealing with how different institutions like family, religion and gender influences individual exercise of their agency.

This Chapter also discussed the importance of trust in providing the framework for collective action and the role of informal sanctions rooted in the non-economic social

relationships that governed the behaviour of individuals engaged in collective projects. Smallholder acceptance of formal institutions like credit systems, trade associations or commission agents are often dependent upon trust and personal relationships rather than on a purely economic benefit analysis. The Chapter also emphasises that trust is important for collective action to function irrespective of whether it is a formal or informal form of smallholder collective action.

Chapter Seven:

7.0 Smallholder Collective Action: Complex Politicisation and Power Interplay

7.1 Introduction

This chapter continues to provide a critique of the mainstream institutionalism perspective on smallholder collective action that emphasises the imperative of economic factors and the rationality of institutions in collective action functioning (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a). Chapter six provided empirical evidence to substantiate how crucial social factors are in smallholder collective action, while supporting the idea for a mixture of economic and non-economic factors in the considerations of smallholder collective action. It noted that the emphasis on economic factors often romanticises the benefits and gains of economic orientation. Chapter seven broadens the discussion on the need to recognise the influence of power in discussions apropos of smallholder collection action.

Mainstream theoretical literature on smallholder collective action provides the normative discussions on the standard procedures for smallholder collective action, including its use as a means of access to market opportunities in developing countries (Mala et al., 2012, Bromwich and Saunders, 2012, Jones et al., 2012). I argue here that structuring smallholder collective action through a formal institutional process might not ensure participation and could lead to lack of interest in the system from the farmers. Power dynamics and moral question of trust are as important as other formal institutional structuring that occurs in smallholder collective action. There is also no concrete evidence that formal structuring of smallholder collective action guarantees to resolving the challenge of exclusion of some farmers. In fact, it could instead lead to high level of exclusion and disinterest when power dynamic is ignored.

In this chapter, the complexity of institutions at play for smallholder collective action to function is illuminated. The factors shaping human behaviour in institutions are diverse, and, as such, social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, individual creativity must be considered. The considerable social agency of individuals

as relational, exercised consciously and non-consciously - individuals within complex social identities and emotions is examined in this chapter.

The framework adopted for the research pivots on the Critical Institutionalism perspective, which recognises that Social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, individual creativity shapes human behaviour in institutions. From this perspective, power is an important factor in the determination of individual action toward a group and how individuals are able to creatively exercise their agency. In this view, a demonstration of the complex nature of institutions involved in smallholder collective action, many of which are socially embedded in Ugbawka, as well as the dynamics and often-contested nature is examined with practical examples.

This Chapter therefore moves away from the narrow understanding that Information, incentives, rules, sanctions and repeated interactions are the only factors that shape human behaviour in institution. It recognises that social tradition and the management of power plays important role in the functioning of collective action. Importantly is the fact that power is relational and transient. It can move and change from one individual to the other but also depends on the ability of the individual to recognise the changing pendulum of power. Therefore, a recognition of growing importance by an individual or group could lead power shift and an emergence of a new power within spectrum. This chapter presents empirical analytical evidence of how such shift in power could occur and how such shift could alter the functioning of smallholder collective action.

There is equally a recognition that decision making and negotiations embedded in everyday life are shaped by history and politics rather than merely by interaction conducted in public fora as opined by the mainstream institutionalists. Crucial is the fact that local everyday politics through which power is most exercised and contested at the local level cannot be delinked through crafting; design principles characterise robust institutions. Everyday life of smallholders is woven into the political fabric of survival (Birner and Resnick, 2010, Markelova and Mwangi, 2010, Tria Kerkvliet, 2009). The chapter attempts to address this lacuna and demonstrate how the local

space where smallholder collective action takes place is not as politically harmonious and devoid of politics. To be sure, the politics that occurs within smallholder collective action space are rooted in everyday interaction and ordinary forms of sociality, that are often about survival for livelihoods (Tria Kerkvliet, 2009).

These local and everyday politics are often conceived as livelihood strategy through which smallholders at the rural communities express and exercise their agency in order to survive and sustain their social livelihoods (Ellis, 2000a). The legitimization of smallholder collective action in rural Nigeria is not only socially rooted but is also politically defined especially in view of the wave of liberal democracy that has permeated Nigeria since 1999 and the consistent contestation between political structures at the rural level and the installed governmental structure of power. The local arena for smallholder collective action is as political as every other arena of human interaction. This chapter therefore argues that smallholder collective action occurs in a political space through contestations, struggles and negotiations. Tria Kerkvliet (2009) argues that politics is part of everyday life of smallholders while Desmarais (2008) argues for the recognition of political struggle, informal alliance building and contestation as part of the everyday life of smallholders. Specifically, Nagel (1981) recalled the 25th of November 1968 farmers protest in Ibadan, Nigeria as an important element of smallholder collective action and struggle for freedom in the Nigeria agricultural trajectory. The chapter begins by exploring the importance of trust in smallholder collective action and how lack of it could set in motion intriguing politics of survival.

7.2 Collective Action and the Role of Trust

Trust can be understood as an expectation of another's behaviour supported by a confidence either in personal relationships or in institutions of enforcement (Gambetta, 1989, p. 217, Lyon and Porter, 2009). Trust is central to trading networks both locally and around the world (Lyon and Porter, 2009). In areas where there is a limited history of reliable state regulation and where communication is constrained, trust plays an even larger role in facilitating smallholder collective action. This is the

case in most of West Africa where informal trading and collective action is still very prevalent (Lyon, 2000, Holtzman et al., 1988). In a development context, trust plays a substantial role in engendering the participation of members of the community in a collective action project. Individuals who are respected and who, within the traditional social structure, are deemed trustworthy may have a large impact on leading other members of the community to participation and in overcoming resistance. Trust is an important factor of social bonding in Ugbawka through which social capital is nurtured and strengthened (Mbah, 1997).

Trust also interacts with power. Conditions of domination and subordination do not lend themselves readily to trust. For example, in a situation where a commission-agent or broker dealing with a smallholder farmer indicate a disparity of power, then institutional power is mediated by the web of social relationships that are rooted in traditions and norms (Lyon and Porter, 2009). The currency of these relationships is that trust is gained and sustained through shared understandings in lieu of enforcement of rules. Behaviour on the part of the formal institution that disrupts or damages the informal system would be detrimental to both formal and informal system (Lyon and Porter, 2009). Chapter four underscored the role of trust in Igbo society and how the occasion of *Ofo* mediate and foster trust among members of a community. It has also been argued that personal trust is the key to making markets work at the lower end of the trade hierarchy (Clark, 1994, pp. 228-34, Chalfin, 2004, pp. 225-52).

In societies like Ugbawka that lack comprehensive market structures and weak governmental institutions, markets are inherently uncertain and personal relationships anchored on trust help to reduce the uncertainty. These relationships encourage reliable behaviour on both sides by creating a desire to reciprocate and by offering the threat of the sanctions controlled by the other party. For example, malfeasance in a transaction with one party might lead to a loss of business with that person's entire network of kin and neighbours due to the extended consequences of lack of trust that transcends individual person to family

Trust is also an important factor in determining participation and engagement in collective action because the lack of faith in an institution will make it difficult for individuals to participate (Lyon and Porter, 2009). For example, the regulatory agencies in Nigeria, particularly in the food sector, are generally perceived as corrupt and lack trust (Meagher, 2010). These institutions are also seen as lacking the ability to enforce agreements with any reliability (Mustapha and Meagher, 2000). According to Bandiera et al. (2005b), lack of trust could lead to non-participation and resistance to the institution by the individuals. As a result, smallholder farmers would instead pursue other, non-state forms of collective action that are regulated through personal relations and other institutions like trade associations rather than congregate in a formal non-trusted form of smallholder collective.

In Chapter six, four (two informal and two formal cases of collective action) were analysed. Both FADAMA and SONGHAI Enugu Initiatives followed the mainstream design and are supposed to function formally through established formal channels[33]. They are managed by the State Ministry of Agriculture and funded collaboratively by the World Bank and the Enugu State Government. The benefits for becoming a member of the association under the two projects appear very attractive from the project reports (World Bank, 2010a, World Bank, 2000). Members are supposedly guaranteed access to loan, access to fertilizer, use of state marketing channels and structure, access to Ministry's agricultural equipment at subsidized rate and other state based incentives. Membership for both SONGHAI and FADAMA association is supposedly open and farmers from the local government or community where the projects are located can become members. However, despite the supposedly overwhelming benefits and the openness of the membership, evidence on the ground reveals that the motivation for membership of both FADAMA and SOGHAI is very low among Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers.

[33] The project structure was discussed and highlighted in Chapter six and showed structural arrangement from the central state coordination board through the senatorial zones to the 17 local government areas of the State.

This low interest and motivation towards the SONGHAI and FADAMA projects are based on two important socio-political factors. Historically, government relationship with farmers in Nigeria has been low since the discovery of oil and the neglect of agricultural sector, to which the smallholders belong. This is made worse by the pervasive corruption that has followed budget on agriculture since the early 1960s till date. For instance, annual budget of Nigeria in 2009 and 2010 has millions earmarked for Irrigation Dam in Ugbawka. This notwithstanding, in 2015, there are no signs of irrigation Dam commencement nor completion in Ugbawka (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2009, Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

Related to the above is the challenging question of trust. Evidence suggests that smallholder farmers in Ugbawka view both projects as politically motivated and that government cannot be trusted. Historically, cases of failed commitment from the government consistently came up as the core reason for lack of motivation from the farmers and, based on those facts, the farmers' perception of government collective action initiative is taken with a "*pinch of salt*". Furthermore, evidence equally showed that there was no consultation with the farmers by the project coordination office despite project design. Decision and implementation plan were based on political imperatives. All the Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers interviewed on FADAMA and SONGHAI confirmed that no consultation took place, while the trainees confirmed that their selected were based on political recognition and that there were never farmers before their selection to become part of the project.

The consistent failure of government to become accountable and responsible has led to some level of detachment of the farmers from the state. Farmers have therefore decided to rely on personalised relationships based on informal systems embedded in their culture. In this situation, informal personalized relationship is essential in order to reduce risk and uncertainty because for the farmers, cooperation is ensured through the process of trust anchored on the principle of reciprocity and fear of collective communal sanction. Such sanction typically stretches beyond immediate activities to other areas of community cooperation. The Ministry projects therefore demonstrate

that where trust is not assured, smallholder farmers are not interested in participating in collective action. Informal sources are vital for the farmers to identify whom they are likely to cooperate with. Although they acknowledged the existence of formal rules based on state established authority, such rules hold no influence on the farmers' motivation to work collectively with other farmers. This is in line with the view of Möllering (2005) on the duality of trust and control with each assuming the existence of the other. In the words of one of the farmers:

> *I do not want to think that I could have made millions of Naira because I do not also want to regret any of my action if I join. Our relationship with the state for years has been based on lies and more lies. For me, I must trust the person or institution before working with the person of the institution. It is more important for me to protect what I have rather than joining up losing what I have worked all my life. So for me, I would rather join with my friends and family and other people I have connection with which I trust than joining because of the perceived economic advantage with joining the FADAMA. The government does not care about us and I do not want to increase my risk. If I join with friends and family, I am certain I will not be cheated and even if I am cheated there are trusted avenues for redress that are easy to access.*[34]

Another particular smallholder rice farmer remarked that participating in any of the project is a waste of time. In his words:

> *Why should I waste my time knowing fully that in the end my membership will be hijacked and used for political purpose? Worst still how am I sure I will not also waste my money in becoming a member and my time in coming to wait for input or support that would have probably been shared behind all the members?*[35]

This assertion by the farmers represent the view of most of the smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka and confirms the Critical Institutionalist theoretical position that

[34] Interview with one of the farmers on their relationship with the state and the nature of the participation in formal system of smallholder collective action managed by the state.
[35] Interview with rice farmer in August 2010.

the agency is relational and can be exercised consciously and non-consciously within complex social identities and emotions. In some cases, trust as an emotional value added overrides any perceived economic benefit which might accrue from participation in either FADAMA or SONGHAI. The continuing lack of consultation by the project coordination office and the overriding political determinism that underpin decision making on the project equally validates the Critical institutional perspective that smallholder participation in collective action initiatives are formed and informed by history and politics and, for this reason, cannot be based on rigid decisions (Cleaver, 2007, Gyau et al., 2014, Lyon and Porter, 2009, Shiferaw et al., 2008).

Since the early view of Olson Mancur that individual are naturally self-seeking and that collective action is rare expect through externally imposed incentives (Olson, 1965), many other scholars have emerged to contradict that assertion arguing that individuals adopt not only a materially calculating posture but rather a richer, more emotionally nuanced reciprocal one, which are often rounded in socio-political context (Dasgupta, 1989, Gambetta, 1989). Trust is an important element in this perspective that played out as a core and underpinning factor that determined whether the Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers joined the projects.

Trust is not straightforward, however. It requires the acceptance of certain level of vulnerability but also a confidence that the other actor will react and act responsibly. According to O'Neill (2002, p. 76), well placed trust is active through consistent and extended questioning and listening overtime rather than blind acceptance. Moore (1994) argues that personal trust is best fit in a complex social dynamic where law and rule are likely to fall short of expectation and formal systems are detached from the people. This resonates with the situation and lived realities of Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers. Although the farmers accepted that material and economic incentive are part of their motivation to engage in collective action, nonetheless they argued that rules are for individuals, who can decide to obey or disobey them. Furthermore, when engaged in collective action with people with which they were socially embedded, the farmers noted that collective action becomes much easier due

to the social linkages and the confidence that trust brings. Such linkages stretch beyond the immediate collective action initiative to other aspects of life within the community in a way that defaulters would be able to suffer reprimand in a socially constructed manner. Through observation and interview it was further revealed that the level of community grouping, extended family linkage, kindred, linage with the community crucial role in determining how different smallholder exercise their agency in participation in smallholder collective action initiative.

Whilst the FADAMA and SOGHAI lacked the socially embedded factors to motivate Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers to participate in the initiative, the Isusu and the Women Rice Farmers and Paddy Traders Group did. The functioning of the Isusu and women rice farmers and paddy traders group relied mainly on social ties through anchored on trust. The processes of recruitment, contribution, access to group fund and support as well as fear of sanctions were based on two important values of trust and reciprocity. The women in both groups were able to tap into their social connections and cultural ties to ensure the solid function and stability of the groups. Their system of support which allowed for a member to access funds, even due to unforeseen personal and family challenges, recognises that individual circumstances are not always confined to standards and rules, and that the ultimate outcome and purpose of collective action is not simply to ensure efficient resources management outcomes but that collective action for the group is socially embedded and that non recognition of the social could lead to uneven access and exclusion from the group [36].

Importantly, contrary to mainstream institutional arguments, motivation and outcome of smallholder collective action is beyond materialism and effective management of resources. They are linked to socio-cultural realties where trust, embedded in family lineage, kindred and other social units are crucial. Arguably, systems of social

[36] Mainstream perspective holds that outcome of smallholder collective action is to produce efficient resources management outcomes, while the Critical Intuitionalists are of the view that institutions evolve to "socially fit" and functionality may result in access to or exclusion from resources. See C CLEAVER, F. 2012. *Development Through Bricolage: Rethinking Institutions for Natural Resource Management,* London, Routledge, CLEAVER, F. 2001. Institutional Bricolage, Conflict and Cooperation in Usangu, Tanzania. *IDS Bulletin,* 32**,** 26-35.

organisation based on culturally antidotes, determines to a large extent the engagement of individual in collective action. Imperatively, social ties are as important as economic benefits in smallholder collective action because it performs regulatory roles in informal collective action the same way formal institutional design perform in formal collective action initiative (Roberts, 1994, Mingione, 1994). This is certainly the case with Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers. As Roberts (1994, p. 8) puts it:

> *All markets are regulated… so the issue is the balance between formal regulation by the state and informal regulation based on personal relations such as kinship, friendship or co-ethnicity. Personal relations that sustain them may under certain conditions prove more efficient in regulating economic activities than the formal structures giving those activities that are regulated socially a competitive edge over formally regulated ones.*

Similar evidences were also found in a research conducted in the Plateau, North Central Nigeria, where it was revealed that collective action among smallholder vegetable farmers are shaped and motivated by ethnicity and not economic incentives (Porter et al., 2003). Smallholder participation and acceptance of institutions like credit systems, traders' associations and commission agents in Nigeria are based on trust and not potential economic benefits because moral question is an important element in determining collective action among smallholders in Nigeria (Lyon, 2000, Lyon and Porter, 2009).

7.3 Smallholder Collective Action in Ugbawka: Everyday Politics and Power Dynamics

> *"A system of collective action is a power system because power is a fundamental and inescapable ingredient of all social relationships" (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977, p. 27)*

> *"Power presupposes the existence of relatively autonomous actors endowed with unequal and unbalanced power resources, but who are never or rarely ever, totally destitute of power, since even the most*

impoverished in this respect still have at least "the ability" in reality and not just in theory to refuse to do what is expected of them or to do it another way" (Friedberg, 1993, p. 251)

This study accepts the above relational definition of power but also combines it with the more recognised institutionally embedded analysis of power. It touches on the relationship between the farmers on the one side as well as their relationship with constituted authorities vested with power. In the two relationships, power is at the centre of the everyday life of the Ugbawka smallholders in their routine efforts to eke out a living and sustain meaningful livelihoods.

Inadequate attention has been paid to dynamics of politics and power in smallholder collective action and there are growing assumptions that when individual farmers organise together with others, they are often perceived as acting collectively. The issues of everyday politics that occur amongst smallholders is rarely the subject of scholarly interrogation. In most mainstream empirical case studies, power struggle is often presented to be between group of smallholder farmers and big corporations in an attempt to secure and negotiate better or higher profit margin. Mainstream views have described such power and negotiation relationship between smallholders and big companies as empowerment. The focus on output of relationship between smallholder farmers and big companies limits the space for a grounded understanding of the power dynamics within informal governance structure where smallholder collective action occurs.

Attempts at analysing power only from the perspective of economic relationships and negotiations between smallholder and large companies limit power focus only on efficiency and output. It reduces the ability of mainstream participatory based approaches to facilitate any social change to the advantage of marginal groups due to the neglect of the underlying structural factors shaping individual interaction and participation in collective action (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). The dynamic of participation in collective action and the effects of power relations within defined

space for collective participation have consequences for who enters and departs from the space and has implication on shaping the discourse and in identifying who participates within that space (Cornwall, 2004, Gaventa, 2006, Cornwall, 2007).

Scholars have pursued the complex relationships between culture, power and development in more rigorous and nuanced ways that point to how politics plays a significant role in shaping local development (Moore, 1999). It should be noted that the term local is not used to mean 'a site hermetically sealed off from relational, translocal linkages' (Moore, 1999), nor homogeneous community (Leach et al., 1999), but rather an arena that engages in struggles over cultural practice that are embedded in social networks and governance institutions and whose nature and outcomes affect the nature of village-level power (Bebbington et al., 2004, p. 189). It is therefore important to pay attention to the local level tension, conflicts and politics because it is within these dynamics that initiatives can easily aggravate and expose potential complex situations.

In Ugbawka, the political dimension of smallholder collective action relates to diverse interest, preferences, values and ideas that are both consciously sorted out through cooperation, conflict and negotiation and others that are impulsively taken. The day-to-day accommodation, contestation and negotiation amongst smallholder farmers that take place within the arena of collective action in Ugbawka can be well understood within the space of power and politics, which are sometimes overlooked and sidestepped in analysis. The decisions to participate in smallholder collective action and the decision on whom to cooperate with are all influenced by everyday politics built within the power space. The example from Ugbawka illustrates how internal social structures are used to shape how people respond to different opportunities and aligns themselves to different forms of smallholder collective action. Evidence on how different smallholder farmers join farming settlement groups in Ugbawka reveals the politics of collective action.

Farm settlements are part of the family culture in Ugbawka (Mbah, 1997). In Chapter five, I highlighted how farmers often leave their homes and settle temporarily in a particular farm settlement during the farming peak period. This is done in order to keep the family focused on the farming task for a particular immediate period. However, decisions on which settlement group to join are easily made by individual families. It is also not entirely based on availability or ownership of land but also on other political factors. Evidence reveals that farmers lobby to join specific groups due to different socio political reasons such as the individual members of the group, proximity to the community, group leaders and even the desire to become a de-facto leader. Therefore, in joining a particular farm settlement group, individual farmers play different kinds of local politics.

One of such politics is the politics of belonging. There is a general and community feeling of respect towards a *de-facto* leader of a settlement group because of his ability to command respect due to his level of uprightness. His command of the respect of others makes him the *de-facto* leader of the group. Therefore, in deciding a farming settlement group, individual smallholder first seeks to know the leader of the group if they are not part of the initial formation. Farmers thus play the politics of belonging, which revolves around identifying and attaching emotionally to a group in order to align their interest to the accepted norms (Yuval-Davis, 2006, Yuval-Davis, 2011). In most cases, individual farmers after identifying the leader of the group embarks on a tactical mission to ensure that the leaders affirm of their character to become committed members of the farm settlement group. For example, a farmer convinced his wife to become a close associate of the wife of the group leader so as to open a channel of lobbying for acceptance into the group.

For example, a farmer convinced his wife to become a close associate of the wife of the group leader in order to ascertain the leader's impression of him. The farmers noted in an interview:

For me to be sure that I will not be without any group for the settlement, I wanted to know and be sure that Ojiofo trusted me to be a good member of the group and that he does not see me as one who will create disunity when we get to the settlement. He is not elected a leader but everyone respects him because he has earned that respect in this community. So if he has a position against my joining the group, the others will follow him because of his role and how he commands respect. I also had to let my wife find out from one of his wives because I might end up stranded with any group[37].

Joining a farm settlement group by an individual farmer could also take exactly the opposite. Some farmers instead of attempting to please the de-facto leader rather sets out to vet the character of the de-facto leader in order to ascertain the level of respectability among the group especially if the de-facto leader does not command general respect within the community. They attempt to seek clarification on the personality of the de-facto leaders as well examining history of their relationship with others in farm settlement groups. According to Chabal (2009b), the politics that takes place before the formation of the groups occurs at the realm of the informal beyond the economic activity but also made up of socio-cultural and political facets of everyday life of rural smallholders whereby people through little action are constantly striving for survival be engaging in social politics that are culturally and emotionally rooted. Invariably, the power to influence their lives and engage in daily form of collective action as smallholders are not entirely tied to one actor (although an actor can contribute) but are embodied in a web of relationships and discourses which affect everyone but not in a zero sum game manner (Gaventa, 2006).

Leadership and access to control of a group is also another important factor that emerged as a reason for choice of group or decision to join a group. During the research, I visited five rice farm settlements of different groups of smallholder rice farmers and interacted with the de-facto leaders of each of the group. I posed a

[3737] Interview with a farmer from Ugbawka conducted by Chika Charles Aniekwe in May 2010 in Ugbawka.

question to all the leaders to ascertain whether they will be comfortable to belong to another group where another person is leading the group. A leader of one of the settlements confirmed that the main reason he initiated a new settlement rather join an existing one was to ensure that he becomes the de-facto leader. He conceded that prior to this initiation and formation of a settlement group, the leader of his previous group accepted and allowed his ideas and initiatives. However, he was keen to lead a new group and be responsible for others. Another leader of the group attested identified opportunities to represent people in community decision-making processes as an important motivation to lead a group. It means that he will be recognised by the group if the group functions effectively and in unity. There is also the opportunity to be responsible for establishing trading partnership. This leader confirmed that, it was also an opportunity to establish trading partnership and relationship with specific buyers that motivated him to organise a new settlement group.

> *The decision to start up a settlement with other farmers is for him to be able to use his social capital with some buyers in the city. It also provides you with the opportunity to influence other farmers' decision but also to build trust and loyalty with both the farmers in the group and the traders who can trust you in supplying rice in bulk through the group.*

Another important political dimension is the deliberate avoidance between families in the formation of the settlement groups based on historical family feuds. Although the objective of the settlement is for collective action to enable the different farmers function as a group, protect each other, enjoy labour reciprocity and partake in group benefit through collective bargaining and trading, some farmers lobbied to join different groups to avoid other farmers due to historical family differences that date back to decades. As one of the farmers who cannot be named here (for ethical reasons) remarked:

> *I will not join the other group because, I can never forget how his father tricked my father and used my father and the others to achieve his*

objective. He is the same as his father and I rather spare myself of the agony than belonging to the same settlement group with him[38].

An important dimension to this is that the families who are not able to work collectively with each other go through different political schemes to create favourable divisions. Data from informal interview reveal that families spent time outside normal working hours to narrate their family's version of the issue between the two families in attempt to consciously lure other farmers in their favour. Beside the family difference, power and political contestation manifest in attempts by smallholder farmers in Ugbawka to secure and control hired labourers from migrant groups of labourers. Some of the leaders of each of the farm settlements host migrant labourers from neighbouring village in order to exert control and indirectly determine who gets access to the migrant labourers, when and how. Historical details revealed that such attempt to usurp migrant labourers labour power led to *labour gangsterism*, which I examine later in this chapter.

Examples from the formation of the farm settlement group shows that understanding rural smallholder collective action requires an analysis of the politics of belonging and partaking, which are closely connected to elements of proximity, reciprocity and trust within a network of people (Chabal, 2009b). The influences of family as discussed equally confirms that networking in local informal economy draws from family, kin and clan and there is often strong connection and struggle to protect what is perceived as belonging to "*us". S*urvival also depends on the extent to which individuals draw from collectives (family, kin or clan) and are able to protect their interest and as well draw substantially from other external opportunities without necessarily upsetting immediate networks of kin, family or clan. However, when there is an upset of the network, it could substantially lead to power play and collective action politicking. Therefore, survival depends on the extent to which people are able to draw on different networks without necessarily disregarding existing links through embedded relationship of solidarity and trust (Meagher, 2010).

[38] Interview with a smallholder farmer in Ugbawka, on 4 June 2010

Surviving and maintaining the networks and social ties in local community require great deal and exercise of agency in a creative way in order to not only sustain existing structure and solidarity but to also create and link up to new networks. The examples of farm settlement groups demonstrate the creative politicking amongst smallholder farmers in Ugbawka in a way that ensure the sustenance and survival of networks. It also demonstrates that people do not consent to power because they are not aware of it but rather because they are socially tied or socialised not to challenge them (Eyben et al., 2006). The action of some farmers through resorting to forming settlement groups in order to push their ideas forward also demonstrates that although people may consent to power due to attachment to socially embedded practices, they could as well exercise their agency by using power invisibly to resist existing unfavourable space in order to create and dominate new space (Gaventa, 2006).

While the mainstream institutional perspective might view this type of consistent local politicking and power as distortion and/or corruption to the formal arrangement, informal scholars, and other socio-anthropologists accept such local politicking as part of individual exercise of agency. In short, Meagher (2010) argues that this is part and parcel of politics of survival in a disruptive setting occasioned by rapid liberalisation and weakness of the state. She pointed that in Nigeria, government abandonment of its roles and responsibilities has created opportunity for informal sector arrangement through collective action to thrive in a politically nuanced manner (Ibid). Chabal (2009b) argues that the important element of African social relation lies in the individual's perception of who they are in a multiple and multifaceted relations, which links them to as many members of the community as possible within an ever expanding and overlapping concentric spheres of identities.

The farmers attempt secure group membership through lobbying and by using their wife as channels or by building social ties to confirm their acceptance were all part of local politics design not to hurt another person but solely to ensure that there is space and opportunity to draw on different identities and survive. This also goes to show

that Ugbawka people value and cherish communal sense of belonging and identity and are indeed using it as means of collective action. Borrowing from Chabal (2009b) an individual in Ugbawka is viewed as belonging to a community, but defined by multiple identities, that shapes his/her social position within the community. In the next section, I will turn to examine how local politics manifests itself in labour sources through the dynamics of power and control.

7.4 Internal Politicking and Labour "Gangsterism" in Ugbawka

In this section, I explore how internal politicking among smallholder farmers in Ugbawka provided migrant labourers from neighbouring communities the space to gradually structure and form a collective action groups in order to protect themselves and control *"who gets what labour, when and how*". In this section, I bring the perspective of organising against status quo as a form of collective action and argue that the politics of small collective action can in fact disrupt and create further space for a new form of collection action. In this section, I use the case of migrant labourers to demonstrate how attempt to control migrant labourers by different farmers in Ugbawka led to *labour gangsterism*[39]*.* In this thesis, I use *labour gangsterism* to mean the organization of migrant labourers into groups to be able to respond to pressure for control from the farmers but also to be able to determine their wage labour, time of work as well as other labour incentives as a way of retaining power over labour supply.

Many rural poor households see migration as a route out of poverty (Murrugarra et al., 2010). Over the past five decades, the rate of internal rural to urban migration has been on the increase with an estimate of 800 million rural population trans-migrating from rural to urban areas (De Villard et al., 2010). The impact of rural-urban migration could be both positive and negative depending on who migrates, reasons for migration, duration and destination. Rural-urban migration could also change and/or

[39] In this thesis, I use labour gangsterism to mean the organization of migrant labourers into groups to be able to respond to pressure for control from the farmers but also to be able to determine their wage labour, time of work as well as other labour incentives.

have gender dimensions and implication on rural household (Goodburn, 2014, Davin, 1996).

Migrants also are becoming increasingly cohesive within a particular location and have used collective action as a tool for protecting themselves in any given society or community against exploitation. Migrant collective action and organising is often a bottom-up political engagement that allows migrants to undergo deskilling and 'complex' class repositioning in order to become active agents and build class-solidarity (Però, 2014).

As a peri-urban community, Ugbawka is close to the state capital of Enugu and therefore provides multiple access for many rural migrants from other neighbouring communities. Its' proximity to the State Capital equally means that young men from Ugbawka migrate in their numbers to the Capital in search of greener pasture, thus creating farm labour scarcity in Ugbawka and making is attractive for migrant labourers and expensive for smallholder farmers. Therefore, some of the rural migrants from other communities who could not make it to the capital eventually settled in Ugbawka as one of the closest community to the State capital. Some also set out at the onset to settle in Ugbawka because of the opportunity to become economic labour migrant in Ugbawka.

Majority of the rice farmers in Ugbawka depend on hired labour. This dependence on hired labour made the migrant labourers an attractive proposition in Ugbawka especially for farmers who are transiting into mid-scale commercial rice farming. Although labour exchange based on reciprocity continued to exist, it has diminished considerably following the advancement in technology and persistent rural-urban migration of Ugbawka young men. The development occurred at the time when there was an increased demand in the labour force required for rice farming coupled with high dependency on hired labour due to expansion in rice farming in Ugbawka. Therefore, the gap created by the out-migration of Ugbawka young men created

another opportunity for in-migration of youth from neighbouring rural communities in search of wage labour.

This migration trend eventually created a dependency syndrome whereby smallholder rice farmers depend on migrant labourers to meet their farm labour demands. It also created room for inward migration into Ugbawka from other neighbouring communities in continuous search of wage labour. In some cases, the older migrant labourers acted as masters and were taking new migrants as apprentice under their care. As the need for migrant labour was expanding, migrant labourers were gaining ground and solidifying their base as an important group in farming in Ugbawka. At the same time, some smallholder rice farmers who are mostly dependent on hired labour were also finding ways to tap into the migrant labour boom and were brining young labourers from neighbouring communities under their care. Evidence from the field data suggests that the unchecked migration of labourers into Ugbawka eventually resulted in the struggle for control of the migrant labourers by some of the rice farmers on the one side and the older migrant labourers on the other side. As a result, older migrant labourers began organising all migrant labourers into one group and started a collective action unit.

As the labour was becoming increasingly scarce, migrant labourers exploited the increase in the demand for labour in their favour while rice farmers were individually scheming for the control of the labourers in order to be assured of steady labour supply. There was no cohesive approach by the Ugbawka rice farmers to engage the migrant labourers collectively as a group. Individual rice farmers rather engaged in invisible intra politics and power struggle to gain control of the source of labour.

However, the struggle by the rice farmers to control the migrant labourers became a signal and triggered the political and strategic agency of the labourers who rather than succumb to the schemes of the different individual farmers organised as a collective and ganged up against the smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka in what I described as *labour gangsterism*. Navarro (2006) argues that the process of mystification by

which the powerful use their symbolic capital to prevent individuals from recognising that their subordination is culturally constructed rather than 'natural' is temporal. He remarks that sociology transforms power because of its potential to reveal this process and thus liberates people from their misconceptions (Navarro, 2006, Eyben et al., 2006). Migrant labourers eventually recognised that, their continued existence in Ugbawka depended on their ability to organise collectively and wrestle power away from the rice farmers and determine their mode of operation, labour hours, wage and other conditions. They realised that their liberation and integration into the community depended on their ability to use their power at the time of intra-farmers' politics and power play amongst the rice farmers in Ugbawka.

Interviews with selected migrant labourers suggested that, as the individual farmers attempted to exert control over the migrant labourers, the migrant labourers created and organised themselves as a counter measure to the growing pressure from selected smallholder rice farmers who were keen on controlling the migrant labourers. Therefore, the migrant labourers formed a membership association and created rules that governed their interaction and engagement with rice farmers in Ugbawka. Structurally, they appeared loosely created, albeit the group rule was strong and commanded respect from all the members. Additionally, the labourers built their association on cultural affinity principally because the members were predominantly from two communities with strong ancestral lineage and also because of the system of apprenticeship in which older labourers recruited and trained the newer labourers to ensure their understanding of the rules and mode of engaging with the Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers. This case aligns to the argument of Però (2014) who noted that attempts to constantly control migrant labourers could engineer a feeling of togetherness and trigger collective action especially when the migrants are closely linked by ethnicity or nationality. This is equally supported by the views of Moody (1997) and Wills (2008) that opined that labour and class-based disputes often lead to re-energised form of collective action among migrant workers against oppressors.

Therefore, through the association of migrant labourers, labour wage became higher and there was also artificial rotation of labour. Migrant labourers began to exert control over labour availability, cost of wage per hour as well as land size to be cultivated and also demanded additional incentives that scarce local labourers from Ugbawka are not entitled to. For instance, if a farmer hires migrant labourers, the household provides the meals for the labourers for the day; that is breakfast, lunch and dinner (dinner is served after working hour), but if a farmer hires local labourers, they are only entitled to lunch, which is served during the farm period. In separate interviews with the Chairperson of the migrant labourers, he revealed that, it was important to organise collectively as a unit in order to offer protection to each other from the Ugbawka rice farmers in Ugbawka who were politicking and trying to control them. He also confirmed that organising themselves allowed them gain control of the rural farm labour market in Ugbawka primarily because they are migrants and could easily be taken for granted if they fail to assert control. In his exact words:

> *Coming into another community where you have no previous friends and where your only source of livelihood is dependent on wage labour, it was important that we come together at some point as a group in order to protect ourselves. So some of us who came into this community initially took it upon ourselves to bring our kinsmen and brothers in order to form a bond among us and determine who and how we engage with the famers. Right now we set the wage, ensure the there is no oversupply of labour and also ensure that farmers take responsibility for our feeding. In short, in some cases we declare free days and on such day, no migrant labourer is allowed to work on the farm else the labourer would get reprimanded through sanctions. We are equally aware that, there is high demand for labour for rice farming in Ugbawka and many rice farmers are in dire need for labour for variety of work in the farm*[40].

[40] Interview with the Chairperson migrant labourers, Ugbawka, on 12 June 2010

Interviewed smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka corroborated the above quote and ruled out the impact of migrant labour *gangsterism* on their farm success including their profitability and productivity. However, most of the smallholder rice farmers interviewed in this regard conceded that, the problem of labour *gangsterism* was as a result of their inability to move beyond internal politics and power struggle, which in their view allowed the migrant labourers to unite for their own success. The farmers also cited the non-existence of a cohesive farmers' association and how it could have helped to check the powers of the migrant labourers. In the words of one of the rice farmers:

> *The migrant labourers are in control of the farm labour market here. They determine how and when labour is supplied and as well control the supply. They demand some outrageous incentives, which our local labours don't demand but at the end we cannot do anything because they have organised themselves very well and can, unite as a group. I would not blame them because we allowed it to happen by not organising collectively enough. We have opportunity to work collectively, but politics and power are standing in the way.*

This implies that while smallholder collective action could become an important strategy for the farmers, internal politics and power struggle could negate their internal strength and expose their weakness to other external actors. This is not particularly surprising because, according to Tria Kerkvliet (2009), the lives of smallholder farmers are full of intrigues and politics that can rarely fit into or be interpreted using the conventional meaning of politics. It revolves around everyday life and struggle for existence within competing needs, limited opportunities and competing social and legal order orchestrated by new wave of development. According to Ellis (2000a) those struggles and politics are part of rural livelihood strategy and survival tactics in a context where opportunities are limited.

7.5 Political Over-Determination of Smallholder Collective Action

In this section, I intend to examine the influence of party politics and the politicisation of smallholder collective in Enugu State and how those influences affects communities like Ugbawka. This is to further justify the inherent politics that are part of smallholder collective action. This section further sheds some light on Cleaver (2012) framework on the nature of institution, form of institution, processes of decision making, model of agency, factors sharing behaviour and the outcome of collective action, which is much more complex and blurred and allows a mixture of politics, individual creativity as well embedded in history. It is also to bring home an argument in this thesis which is that smallholder access to market transcends institutional and formal arrangement designed to get farmers to organise as cooperative, access market opportunities and lobby for high return on their products. This will be done through an analysis of how agricultural support to rice farmers flows from the Enugu State government to the rural smallholder rice farmers and how the unions and cooperatives that emerged in the state are products of political alliances and cronies.
My view is that with such focus on rules, roles, institutions, formality, sanctions and rewards, we miss the opportunity to understand the deeper socio-political ties, and how power dynamics manifests itself. In making my point, I will adduce the cases of some government smallholder programmes in Enugu state to illustrate how externally facilitated smallholder collective action, with rules, roles and institutional formulations are prone to manipulation and politicisation. I have already examined and discussed the FADAMA III and SONGHAI Enugu Initiative.

The political and institutional determinism within the Nigerian political landscape changed dramatically after the 1999 return to democracy. During the military regime that proceeded the 1999 democratic dawn, Nigerian society lived in fear without much freedom. There was no sense of accountability, transparency or rule of law. The very concept of government and governance was totally non-existence as the constitution was suspended by successive military regimes who ruled by decrees (Omotoso, 2013). The repressive military regimes were not concerned about the plight of the poor rural dwellers but rather focused on the maintenance of the corrupt institutions

and illegality that sustained them in power. However, during the transition to civilian rule in the lead up to the 1999 return to democratic rule, political elites began to create party structures at all levels of government including at the ward levels, which is the lowest level of party structure in Nigeria and primarily located in various rural communities. The creation, and in some cases political proliferation of party structures at the rural level, triggered the emergence of rural political elites as political party representatives at the rural level. These new rural political elites assumed new level of political power at the rural level and their newfound power often contradicted with the role of the already existing village governance structures. While the new rural elites derived their power and authority from outside the community through the various parties, the existing village governance structure derived their power and authority legitimately from the community. The power of the new political elites representing various parties from artificially decentralised power came from the political parties in the capital. However, the rural representatives of the party in power derived their power from the party and indirectly from the government through the local government.

Rather than using their newfound power and political capital to attract development to the community, the rural political elite in Ugbawka viewed their political capital as a means of exerting power and disrupting an already functional governance system in the community. In Chapter Four, I highlighted how the colonial influences through warrant chief wrestled power from village governance structures. Here, I will show how the new rural political elites that emerged used the political power and capital to influence smallholder collective action. From the perspective of the tiny rural political elites who held positions as ward councillor, chairpersons, or youth leaders, it was an avenue for vertical political integration and an opportunity for accessing input and other government support intended for all smallholders in Ugbawka. It was an avenue for class movement, an opportunity to join a different class and participate in the control and allocation of state agricultural resources as well as a platform to exert control and gain recognition from the rural population. Through the creation of rural party structures, the rural power dynamics transformed and shifted the power

pendulum and interplay in Ugbawka as the village governance structure; the council responsible for governing and making decision for the community struggled to assert and wield complete control of the village affairs due to interference and counter forces from the new political elite with support from the local government. In some cases, the new political elites used political links to the state party structure where the democratic support at the state level emanated to exert control over the village council. However, this did not always result in the outcome the new political elite at the village level desired. Such political grandstanding caused both intra and inter political conflicts in Nigeria since the onset of new democracy in 1999 (Ukiwo, 2003). One of the new political elites, a Ward Councillor at the time of the research, remarked that:

> *As a Ward Councillor, I am elected to represent my people at the local government assembly and to put forward the views of my people. I cannot be held back by village council leadership who thinks I have to come through them in order to reach the people. I have the mandate to represent the people*[41]*.*

When pressed further on why he could not consult with the village council leadership on issues affecting the community, the Ward Councillor stated that it was his choice to decide whether to consult the village council or not and not for the village council members to make decisions. The Ward Councillor's tone, response and demeanour during this interview clearly showed an expression of power tussle between him and the village councils. On the other hand, the village council leadership accused most of the rural political elites (including the ward councillors) of selfishness and lack of respect for the community. They argued that the election of ward councillors should be for the interest of the community and not to divide and rule the community. Besides, they noted that the role of the ward councillors was confined to representation and that the aggregation of views in the community must remain through the village council. Those views can then be channelled to the local government through the various ward councillors. The village council leadership gave

[41] Interview with a Ward Councillor of Ward 10 Ugbawka, on 4 July 2010.

an example of how the rural political elites used their political capital to their advantage on State agricultural projects without allowing other farmers to benefit from it.

7.5.1 The Politics of Membership of Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria

Some of the State agricultural project are the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), the Commercial Agricultural Development Project (CADP), the FADAMA project and the SONGHAI Enugu Initiative (SEI). The World Bank and the Nigerian Ministry of Agriculture funded the first three projects, while the SONGHAI Enugu initiative was a state government initiative with support from the World Bank. Rice was one of the value chain products under these project and Ugbawka is one of the foremost rice farming community in Enugu State. I examined the structure of the state chapter of Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN) and how information and support move around within the state chapter of RIFAN to the rural areas. In particular, I examined the participation of rice farmers from Ugbawka in the RIFAN. The field data reveals a clear politicization, membership and access to agricultural support and incentives in the state along political line. There was clear evidence, which illustrated that access to agricultural support services were tied to membership of the political party in power. The ward councillors from the various communities in the State including Ugbawka controlled who joined RIFAN from their communities.

The provision of agricultural support services was also rendered in favour of three particular groups, including those at the state capital who were never farmers but primarily joined RIFAN to divert agricultural supports and incentives to political supporters, friends and families. These were the group I refer to as *masquerading farmers* with political link to the ruling party and with vested interest in benefitting from the project earmarked for smallholder farmer groups. The second group are those rural political elites whose newfound political power and class migration gave them unexpected rise in power hierarchy. Therefore, access to any form of agricultural support became another form of political incentives. Most of the people in this category were farmers in their various communities but suddenly became elected as

ward councillors. For them, it was an opportunity to showcase new power but more importantly to have access to government support for their farming without sharing information to other farming in Ugbawka. The councillors from Ugbawka belong to this group. The last group are the rice farmers whose membership of the ruling party became a means to accessing information and agricultural support. This last group were not councillors but members of the ruling party who were farmers in their various communities but politically linked to the ruling party at the community level. For them, their membership was a form of democracy dividend for their support to the party in power during the previous elections.

The projects were designed in line with the mainstream design institutional prescriptions and strictly through an institutionalised collective action with formal rules, roles, characteristics of membership as well as rewards and sanctions that were to apply to all members. In contrast, political capital became a means through which agricultural support and input were shared and the support completely evaded the targeted recipients. This cases are in line with the arguments of Baumann and Sinha (2001) and (Xu, 2012) that suggested that when smallholder collective initiative is strictly designed to follow formal institutional structures and channels without consideration to political, cultural and social imperative, in most cases the support completely evaded the targeted recipients. Additionally, the FADAMA III and SONGHAI as discussed in Chapter six demonstrated how party and politics overrides smallholder needs and how the selection of the trainees, access to credit for SONGHAI farmers were based on political patronage.

7.5.2 The Politics of Access to Hybrid Rice Seeds

Policies supporting smallholder farmers' development in Nigeria since the colonial time till date has been inconsistent at best. The Nigerian government has attempted several smallholder development policies that were aimed at addressing the inadequacies and shortcomings that have hinder the improvement of smallholder but the result of these policies have been often been the same and ineffective. One main

areas that the smallholders have endured for a long time is in the area of access to rice seeds.

There is neglect for traditional and indigenous seeds banks in some Africa countries even though it has the potential for sustainability especially with family seed institutions with capacity for collaborative links with each other to store, replenish and ensure long term conservation (Misiko, 2010). There is also reliance on new improved seeds through local seed dealers linked to extension services, NGOs and a new class of contract seed producers that abide by rules and regulations set by the formal seed system (Okry et al., 2010). Traditional, non-hybrid seeds are very popular in Ugbawka and the rice farmers there have relied on them for years. Over the years, Ugbawka has become known for a particular form of rice known for its cleanliness and quality. The dominance of rice as the most popular staple food in Nigeria has trigged the attention of the Federal Government in setting up seed research centres such as the National Cereal Research Institute (NCRI) in 1974; National Seed Service (NSS) in 1975; The National Grain Production Programme (NGPP) and the Seed Policy of 1992 (Akpokodje et al., 2003a). Policy efforts by the Nigeria government have not translated into concrete action in term access to improved rice seeds for smallholder rice farmers. In Ugbawka, the use of traditional methods of seed storage and preservation was prevalent, nevertheless smallholder rice farmers were very open to adopting new seeds and always keen to accessing hybrid seeds. This is contrary to some argument that smallholder rice farmers are averse to innovation and use of improved seeds (Collier and Dercon, 2009).

Although, hybrid rice seeds gained root in Sub-Saharan African countries in 2004, access to them have become increasing manipulative, politicised and often based on farmer's ability to either use his/her existing social capital or pay for use of social or political capital. In collaborative donor funded projects, participation in collective action aimed at providing access to hybrid rice seeds is highly politicised and corrupt and does not reflect proper representation smallholder rice farmers in the state

In order to understand the politics of access to hybrid seeds, selected smallholders were interviewed on how they negotiated access to hybrid rice seeds. The research revealed that at least 30% of the farmers used hybrid rice seeds at one point during the course of the rice-farming season depending on availability, access as well as the cost. However, the bulk of the rice farmers in Ugbawka including the 30% that used hybrid seeds relied on locally stored seeds. Farmers adopted hybrid rice for many reasons including the perception of its superiority over the local breeds, high yields, resistance to crop diseases and pests, as a risk management strategy and for profit making. As one of the farmers noted:

> *I am very happy to use foreign[42] rice seeds but I will not abandon our local seeds entirely. So I combine both of them because some of the foreign seeds tend to germinate and ripe early than our local breed but some of them also are not strong on the ground. So while I cultivate the foreign seeds, I also make sure that, I cultivate our local brand of seeds. So what I do is to cultivate the local seeds early before April and then foreign seeds around June/July. I also cultivate them separately at different parcels of land so that I don't lose my entire yield in case of fungal or pest attack[43].*

Despite the optimal level of acceptance and usage of hybrid rice in Ugbawka, the farmers accepted that they lacked the requisite knowledge and skills about the ecological and fertiliser requirements of hybrid rice seeds. Therefore, most farmers that used hybrid rice first carried out an experiment or trial before going into bigger - scale cultivation.

Hybrid seed users cultivated mostly for commercial purposes and explored means of accessing the hybrid seeds beyond the community. Evidence from interview revealed that farmers that used hybrid rice seeds in Ugbawka accessed them through various means including donor-funded projects, workshops and project seminars. Access to

[42] They refer to hybrid rice seeds as foreign
[43] Interview with a local farmer in Ugbawka, on 27 May 2010.

these seeds suppled through government initiatives were based on the level of political connectedness and the capacity of the farmer to navigate difficult political and contested terrain that required assured resources and capability from the interested rice farmers. In order to access the hybrid rice seeds, a farmer needed in the first instance to be connected to one of the formal structures of government i.e., ward councillors, local government officials, political elites, civil servant in the ministry and importantly ministry of agriculture. The seeds were distributed to the farmers through governmental channels and access to it based on level of political capital and in some cases level of support to the government in the previous election. These seeds therefore flowed through different political channels and structures from donor-funded projects to connected rice farmers in Ugbawka.

Farmers revealed that most hybrid rice seeds came from collaborative donor funded projects, which are mostly supported by government Ministry of Agriculture and international development partners such as the World Bank, IFAD or FAO and also from NGOs promoting the use of improved technology and agro-chemicals. I attended a few workshops organised by the Commercial Agricultural Development Project (CADP), FADAMA and other projects that target smallholder farmers. I also had informal interaction with participants who revealed cases of manipulative schemes designed to create artificial smallholder collectives in order to control seeds supply and distribution. In some cases, participants were hired to be part of the workshop by political cronies in order to gain access and control over participant's benefits such as hybrid seeds and fertilizer. Evidence revealed that Personal Assistants, Special Assistants, or Commissioners submitted names of participants who were to attend planned workshops. The submitted names were mainly supported or hired participants who pre-agreed to participate in order to earn per-diem in return for the hybrid seeds. In most cases, there were no real farmers, but students, artisans and unemployed youths who masqueraded as farmers. The hired participants are pre-informed of their roles by their political agents; as such their participation was schemed to increase their agents' chances of securing more shares of the hybrid rice seeds. A few rice farmers who participated and took their seeds home confirmed that

they lobbied to be included in the workshop lists while others confirmed that their names appeared because of their political support at the community level. Further interviews revealed that the same politicians would later sell the collected hybrid seeds in open markets to the smallholder rice farmers at a very high price through their market agents. One of the beneficiaries noted that:

> *As a member of the PDP ward executive, I get information on workshops organised in partnership with the government through the party structure and I also have the privilege of representing my community in some other workshops by my close association to the government in the capital. So, what I normally do is to get as many seeds as possible and then sell some to other farmers in the community. When I asked further on access to sources he responded… No I keep information on where and how I accessed the seeds to myself otherwise the opportunity might not come to me anymore*[44].

Portraying resource access and control as purely a matter of economic power ignore a number of significant aspects. The conflicts that inevitably arise over resource access and control are mediated through social relationships, cultural understandings, and emotional responses (Barnes, 2000). There are political and non-economic forces that affect the everyday experiences of smallholder farmers and strongly influence the actions they take in response to their government, NGOs and businesses that collaborate with them. The struggle over resources is not just economic but also political and emotional especially when viewed from a more empathetic perspective. It therefore makes sense that a farmer working barely above subsistence levels would respond to actions that impacted his access to hybrid seeds in an emotional manner and would draw upon the support of his social group or network to secure livelihoods. However, such denial of access could also constitute lasting impression on the farmers that could in future hinder future collaboration with the same farmer due to the negative historical lessons. According to Barnes (2000)

[44] Interview with a PDP ward executive in Ugbawka, on 23 May 2010.

control of access to resources are often related to and influenced by local customs, conventions, and relationships that are embedded in historical antecedents.

As a result of the locally oriented nature of many of these access issues, there can be vast differences among different groups within one polity regarding how individuals can gain access to resources such as hybrid rice seeds and how the access/ownership relationships are managed. In some circumstances, the reality of control is far apart from the formality of ownership. Even within one community one individual may own the land or the well, but another may have responsibility of regulating how much is used or which outsiders are authorized to use it. As a result, the social bonds among people of the same community may be more important to the network of resource access than the formal systems of ownership regulated by the state. This is what was obtainable in accessing hybrid seeds in Enugu State. It is more important to have access to political capital than to have all the necessary requisite credential to be a progressive farmer.

Moreover, the highly localized nature of resource control and access, especially in rural areas, sometimes leads political leaders to actively cede control to community leaders (Baland and Platteau, 2001)). Instead of seeking to continually maximize the control over resources, some politicians have drawn on the resurging power of traditional institutions and other new form of local powers to allocate resources and also grant access to (Barnes, 2000). While it might appear anachronistic, to the mainstream institutional perspective in light of the above discussion regarding the importance of social relationships, emotion, and culture in resource access, we cannot ignore contextual realities and role of the socio-political forces mediating resource control and access. However, when the mediator is corrupt and politically motivated, the outcomes are less likely to be the desired outcome for the smallholder farmers. In a sense, there is less devolution of power from the government to the local governance structure but rather the government used political channels created through party structures to perform local governance responsibility. There is also a sense that the government's actual ability to manage the resource at the rural level

was limited and that the web of power relationships in the local communities was too much to navigate. Hence it instead utilized the party rural structures to fill this gap without considerate analysis on the implications of decentralizing such power of management of access and control of resources on the primary target; the smallholder farmers.

7.6 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter explored how politics and power intermingle with the functioning of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka. It examined the social encounters and political manoeuvres in the (re-)structuring and management of smallholder collective action project. Field evidence was provided from three different projects that were implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture in Enugu State. Smallholder collective action from the mainstream institutional perspective clearly gives special attention to the formality and the rigidity of the rule (Devaux et al., 2009, Kruijssen et al., 2009, Markelova and Mwangi, 2010, Barham and Chitemi, 2009). However, institutions that shape interactions in smallholder collective action in a particular locality are complex, complicated and not amenable to technical and managerial rules and roles at all time. Contextual understanding is, therefore, very crucial and the projects used as examples demonstrated the weakness of focusing on design without paying attention to the individual and social actors. An actor-oriented approach is important to understanding rural development and the participation of different actors in collective action (Nyamu-Musembi, 2005, Long, 1990, Long, 2004)

Smallholder collective action in Ugbawka was not always very clear-cut and simple. The complex interactions involved in the functioning of smallholder collective action in Ugbawka cut across internal politics and everyday power struggles, historical family connections and disconnections, labour gangsterism and political meddling. The practical interactions occurring among all the actors determine to a large extent the functioning of smallholder collective action and less on the rules and roles. Depending on the platform and context, smallholder farmers knew whom to act with, when to act and under what condition to act without necessarily subscribing to formal rules and

regulations that govern formal smallholder collective action. In short, formal collective action is often frowned upon and experiences and practical day-to-day situation of collective action in Ugbawka is an important lesson for the farmers to rely upon in making decision and not formal rules.

Chapter 8:

8.0 Conclusion, Research Contributions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the theoretical framework used in this research in interpreting the significance of the findings from the research as reported in the previous chapters. Whereas significant literature was accessed and reviewed during the research in relation to the findings, this chapter takes a broader scope and places the findings from the research within a global framework using the Cleaver (2012) Bricolage Critical Institutionalism Framework.

In 2008, the World Development Report called for the institutionalisation and formalisation of smallholder collective action in order to facilitate the quick access of rural smallholders in the market space in a globalised market space (World Bank, 2007). The WDR inspired new wave of smallholder collective action through formal cooperatives, unions and associations in line with individual rationality theory approach as introduced by Olson (1965) and further developed by other scholars. Ostrom (1990) moved this thinking further and developed the institutional design principles, which is the foundation for the Mainstream Institutional perspectives on smallholder collective action.

It is against this background that many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Oxfam among them, ventured into smallholder collective action projects using this Mainstream Institutional design approach in different developing countries. However, other critical scholars have questioned the rationality of confining smallholder collective action in rural setting within socio-political context into a design approach. Cleaver, for example, has devoted many of her writings questioning the Mainstream Institutional perspective and advancing an alternative approach to smallholder collective action (Cleaver, 2002, Cleaver, 2001, Cleaver, 2007, Cleaver, 2012). In line with Cleaver, this research questioned the prospect of qualitative transformation that

could be achieved through formal institutionalised smallholder collective action by focusing on the same six features namely: nature of institutions formation of institutions; nature of decision making, model of agency, factors shaping human behaviour and outcome of institutions in in order to understand how smallholder collective action, manifest itself at the community level.

The intention of this research was to situate the practice of smallholder collective action within local context in order to understand the complex relationship between the smallholders and different institutional arrangements. In doing so, this research was positioned within a local rice farming community and interacted with smallholder rice farmers as primary research participants. The research interaction also stretched to other actors including government, NGOs, labourers, middlemen etc. who interacts in one way or the other with the smallholder rice farmers. In trying to understand institutional interactions with the smallholder rice farmers, the extent to which economic incentive and motivation supersedes other non-economic factors was examined. Through ethnographic data collection approach, the research examined the various institutional features

8.2 Formal/Public institutions Vs Blurred Boundary of Institutions

One of the key objective of this research is to examine and analyse the nature of institution at play in smallholder collective action. The main areas explored to gain deeper insight on the nature of institutions centred on the relationship between smallholder rice farmers and organisational structures and the farmers who interact with these structures in their daily lives to foster collective action. Cases of collective action which was examined showed that there is no clear dependent on either formal institution or inform structures. In other words, smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka transcends both formal and informal structures. In some cases, some of these farmers tap into vertical and horizontal formal institutions such as the government but in other cases their interaction with institutional arraignment focuses on social organisations like women group, extended family group as well daily practices that cannot be confined into any institutional line.

The Isusu women group, which was a successful smallholder collective action and which served the member effectively is a good example of the blurry nature of collective action institution. The group operated based on socio-cultural principles and values. Their mode of membership, organisation association and method of reward take both formal and informal approach. For instance, while the group kept their fund with the treasurer, they also made us banks depending on the amount of funds. At the same time, while there was a clear understanding of how contribution will be shared, this rule was not inflexible; in fact, it frequently changed according to individual member's social circumstances. In other words, the farmers are not confined to either formal or informal institutional arrangements but open to movement to either side based on circumstances. In some cases, formal institution has served the farmers while in other circumstances informal institution served even better even in impulsive situations where participation is based purely on trust and expectations of the other members without any design rules and regulations.

8.3 Design Vs Daily Practices, Improvisation and Adaptation

The second objective of this research was to explore how institutions of smallholder collective is conducted and formed- does the formation and construction of institutional of smallholder collective action go through crafting and design principles aimed to arriving at robust institutions that result in a blue print design that guides and conditions the behaviour of individual participants.

The role of Ojo Ofors, respectable individuals, family, traditional governance structures, in the formation of collective action initiatives reveals that how existing social institutional arrangement continue to exist and endure despite the implementation of new institutional arrangement based on design. Throughout this thesis, I highlighted the inherent gap in institutional design principles and how efforts by governments, NGO and World Bank to lure smallholders into formal institutional form of smallholder collective action have failed to yield credible result in Ugbawka. I further demonstrated the gaps of institutional deign form of smallholder collective

action using the FADADA and SONGHAI Enugu initiatives. The thinking that designing a formalised form of smallholder collective action initiative will ensure enforcement of rules and reduce free ride only broaden the economic rationality thinking on human relationships. The concern here is that institutional design solutions based on the instrumental utilisation of social institutions to make smallholder collective action more effective, formal and functional seriously underplays, the messiness and complexity of institutional formation (Cleaver et al., 2005, Wong, 2009). It sidesteps the process through which local smallholder farmers draw on history, cultural values, family and other political imperatives to craft and form collective action initiative (Mosse and Sivan, 2005).

My main argument here is that, the World Bank and other mainstream pioneered approach to smallholder collective action based on clear and rigid line, rules, regulation and sanctions takes a rather more business approach and focused too much attention of the needs of the market rather than the needs of the smallholders. In other words, the underpinning objective was to ensure market survival and not the survival of smallholders as collectives. Focusing on the market imperatives and requirement while designing smallholder collective action initiative makes the socio-cultural institutions at play at the local level opaque (Osei-Kufuor, 2010). It grossly neglected the uncertainties and complexities which are part of local realities in context such as Ugbawka.

Drawing on Cleaver (2012) and other Critical and Post Institutionalist theorists such as Wong (2009), Franks and Cleaver (2007) and Benjamin (2008), I interrogated the formal institutional approach to smallholder collective action by exploring how official and socially embedded institutions shaped local collective action initiative. My claim was that official and socially embedded institutions interplayed to shape outcomes of community level interactions and smallholder collective action. I also found that within such interaction, there also exist conflict between the official and socially embedded institutions, and in most cases conflicts are resolved by individual farmers in their exercise of their agency.

We saw how the interaction between the local councillors and the village governance structure produced clashes and struggle for control of village authority and how such conflict produced outcomes that allowed Ugbawka smallholder rice farmers to align themselves in either side of the political divide. Institutions that operate and interact with other to facilitate smallholder collective action in Ugbawka are flexible. The governance arrangements that also operate within the community to shape outcomes of smallholder collective action were also not rigidly applied. They mingle with each other to produce outcomes that will address community-based problems. An example also was the use of several channels by the farmers to facilitate their entry and membership of farm settlement group.

Therefore, the findings from this research has drawn attention to the blurry nature of institutions that facilitate smallholder collective action by arguing that they are interrelated and often overlaps in the function within the locality. They play complementary rather than disaggregate role. In Chapter five, attention was drawn to the existing solidarity in the village embedded in associational life through the family, religious institution, village council and associations such as the Umuadas, age grade and the way they support collective action initiatives. A clear example of the blurry nature of institutions and how smallholders rely on both formal and information system is also reflected in the way the farmers access collective action opportunities in the church without necessarily changing or adjusting their faith to reflect the teachings of the church.

Chapter five also reveals how the community relies on local government council on some issues but on the village governance structure on others. There is no one rigid way but rather an acceptance of the ingredients that makes up each of the institution (formal and informal). For instance, the community relies on the village council to use the tax effectively but also relies on local government for attraction of development support through the councillors. There was also cases of how pre-existing institutions of smallholder collective action took new forms and new roles thereby blurring further the relationships between formal process and informal process for the farmers.

These examples illuminate the difficulty in the argument that the formation of institutions of smallholder collective action is or should be through crafting; design principles characterise robust formal institutions. These examples also point to the fact that existing social and informal institution were not just ad-hoc or spontaneous in nature as suggested by mainstream collective action theorists, they were and remains part existing social relationships upon which individual and collective action initiatives are shaped. The multiple function of institutions such as the family, religious groups, village council, age grade, Umuada, women groups are all clear demonstration of the differing roles of different institutions in community collective action. This also support institutional bricolage framework where old and new institutions could be combined and reinterpreted to solve community problems (Cleaver, 2002, Cleaver, 2012).

8.4 Nature of Decision Making and Model of Agency

Mainstream institutional theorists argue that decision and negotiation is mainly through public fora whereby interactions and debates are conducted transparently. This research through a number of examples has demonstrated that the nature of decision making in smallholder collective is mixed. Decision making on collective action initiative are conducted both at group level as well as individual level. The diversity and multiplicity of actors interacting with different layers and channels occur at the community, family, age grade, union and individual farmers' level. In Chapter seven, I discussed the process of the politics and everyday struggle for survival by the smallholder farmers. This struggle involves using different capitals to access opportunities and sustain their livelihoods. It also requires the smallholders to assess opportunity that occurs in their daily lives based on history and other socio-political considerations. For instance, decision on which farm settle to join is based on historical antecedents based on individual interaction with each as well as political considerations. Some farmer was able to navigate through the huddles of deciding which farm settle to join and which one to avoid by drawing on their individual relationships but also on their historical knowledge of the different families that make up each of the settlement group.

In the same line, the intriguing politicking to control migrant labourers and the eventual organisation of the labourers went through both individual and group negotiation process. Some labourers negotiated and decided on the nature of the relationship with smallholder rice farmers at individual level by engaging their various apprentices and persuaded them to join in organising for a united labourers' union, other decided during labourers' meetings. The Isusu group as well as the women trader group equal demonstrates that membership's decision is negotiated and decided at individual level and accepted at group level. The vetting process involved shows that older members are entrusted with the responsibility to vet a new member.
These examples demonstrate that decision making in smallholder collective action are not always conduced openly in full public glare. It involves complex rubrics of individual interactions which are often fuzzy, continuously negotiable and unpredictable (Cleaver, 2012, Cleaver, 2002). Focusing on the everyday interaction amongst the various smallholder rice farmers as well as with other actors within and beyond the community, this thesis has shown the messy and contested nature of collective action highlighting the consistent and constant process of negotiation among conflicting interest in Ugbawka and between the smallholder farmers and other actors (Mehta et al., 2001). The internal struggle and control over community decision making processes, the variation in outcome of decision among different farmers, the contestation and struggle over farm inputs, the individual scheming for control of migrant labourers and the protection of sources of information reveals the political nature of negotiation and decision making in smallholder collective action.

My findings also illuminate the relational nature of agency in collective action. Attempts by mainstream institutional theorists to conceptualise agency as deliberate public participation in decision-making and collective action are unhelpfully narrow (Cleaver, 2007). The process of decision making by the smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka are not always strategically designed for economic gains or to outwit another actor. The practice of smallholder collective action revealed through cases of everyday lives of the farmers that institutions shape the behaviour of individuals in

different ways. Individuals agency can be exercised consciously & non-consciously involving an outpouring of complex social identities & emotions. The reality is that smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka are influenced and motivated by different arrays and layers of factors. Economic benefits and incentives are much a good reason to engage in collective action as much as socio-cultural imperatives.

Mainstream collective action policies that often tends to view individual as rational strategist and relies more on their idea of bonded rational individual who may exhibit behaviour on a spectrum from ‘‘saint’’ to ‘‘sinner’’, from ‘‘rational egoist’’ to ‘‘conditional cooperator’’ (Ostrom, 2005). Heavily reliant on institutions as the analytic lens through which smallholder farmers’ behaviour can be understood, ignore the social/historical/political formation and location of individuals (Agrawal, 2005, Mollinga, 2001). Categorising people either as rule makers or rule followers tends to equate agency with decision making thereby focusing more on the choices that people make rather than their ability to make those choices (Ostrom, 2005). The case of FADAMA and SONGHAI implementation and the level of participation of actual smallholders show that even in the face of economic incentives farmers could value socio incentive such as trust are more important that material benefit. The ability of the farmers to reject membership of collective action initiative based on perceived sense of mistrust, historical antecedents as well as other political factors suggest that agency is more than just choice we make. Throughout the thesis, the farmers have shown their capacity and power to be the originator of acts as purposive, reflective as well as intuitive actors.

Data has shown that mainstream thinking on formal institutionalised form of collective action is overly optimistic and their expectation of agency based on individual actors as rational and strategic actors is unrealistic and ignore complex social realities of the society, the differences and social structures that shape human action. The discussion and interviews from respondents revealed a huge link between individual subjectivity, interactions and actions. This supported the argument that attempt to alter human behaviours through institutional and hierarchical organizations in not very

practical – individual actions depends on subjectivities of those undergoing regulation (Agrawal, 2005).

In understating participation and non-participation in the formal collective action, the study equally explored the motivation for action, the effect of individual agency and factors that shape agency within a particular context in order to gain insight into how agency shape the actions of smallholder rice farmers in Ugbawka to participate and engage in collective action. The thesis argued that social actors operate in contextual identity and within a complex life in which they engage with diverse and multiple actors in plural spaces based on diverse motivations and the structural constraints that could shape their action in a purposive or impulsive manner (Giddens, 1984). The array of mixed interactions involving diverse actors and institutions makes for unpredictability and un-patterned behaviour from smallholders (Barkin, 2010).

Therefore, in this thesis, I recognise that human agency is shaped by rationality consisting of self-consciousness, reflection, intention, purpose and meaning (Rapport and Overing, 2000). This is also why Cleaver (2007) contents that agency does not exist in a vacuum but is exercised in a social world in which structure shapes the opportunities and resources available to individuals, and where appropriate ways of being and behaving are not simply a matter of individual choice. Thus there is a duality of individuality and rationality that requires balancing between enablement and constraint due the variation resulting from the exercise of agency (Giddens, 1984, Long and Long, 1992). The daily processes of collective action among the smallholders involves dealing with structural constraints but also the non-reflexive everyday actions with intended and unintended outcomes. Furthermore, different motivation shapes the actions of the individual farmers and these motivations are derived both from the need to increase financial and economic opportunities as well the desire to hold and defend social values and virtues.

8.5 Human Behaviour and the Outcomes of Collective Action

The last two objectives of the thesis questioned and examined factors shaping human behaviour and the overall outcome of institutions. The study sought to find out how the behaviour of the farmers are shaped in collective action initiatives. Are the relationships between and amongst the farmers shaped by information, incentives, rules, sanctions and repeated interactions or are there embedded within social structures and power dynamics and shaped by relationships, norms and individual creativity?

In Chapter two, the thesis showed how the mainstream conceptualisation of collective action and the factors that shape individual behaviour in collective is confined to rules, sanctions, rewards and other controlled factors aimed at getting particular designed outcomes. However, as this study has shown, such a conceptualisation of human behaviour in line with designed principles based on rules and sanction failed to recognise the power play associated with collective action functioning. In Chapter four the study illustrated the importance of social factors in Igbo society in general and collective action in particular. The study showed how trust and reciprocity are valued as well as forms the social rubrics of the Igbos and Ugbawka community. The analysis extended to the value attached to Ofor in Igbo society and the sense of responsibility on the shoulder of an Ofor title holder in Igbo society. The respect and reverence attached to the title holder reveals the social embedded nature of collective action and how rule and sanctions can play secondary role in bringing individuals to obedience. It also illustrates the conscious attempts made by community people to sustain their social values and draw inferences and rules from them. The perseverance of such social values becomes important for smallholder farmer in Ugbawka in their interaction with one another more than any formal rules backed by sanctions.

The argument in Chapters Six and Seven further questioned the technocratic and formal approach to smallholder collective action by arguing that individual behaviour

is informed by a variety of factors that cannot easily be controlled by rules. The study reveals that individual smallholder farmers followed certain pattern of behaviour that favours and ensure livelihood sustainability, while at the time open to change in the face of fluid circumstances. The SONGHAI Enugu Initiative demonstrated that even in the face of rules and sanctioned politics somethings override rules and sanctions. Chapter seven also showed how the politics of access to hybrid rice seeds defied the design principles rules but was rather based on political capital. On the other side the grouping by the migrant labourers equally showed how rules can be used to control and govern certain homogenous groups of persons. Individual behaviour and reaction depends on their expectations and the belief that the individual has in that particular system or authority. The study has also shown that people consciously or non-reflexively relied on diverse authority structures to solve their problems and participate in collective action. From engaging in inter family negotiation to reaching out to leaders, there are many cases of varied behavior of the famer that were not controlled by rules as vice versa.

The research has shown that the outcomes of smallholder collective action are mixed. Ideas in mainstream view on collective action claims that collective action institutions are crafted to specifically produce efficient resources management outcomes through the creating of structures that would control and ensure that actors and stakeholder play by agreed rules (Penrose-Buckley, 2007a). Such approach also claims that the crafting of institution will equally result to equitable sharing of resources, information, benefits, risk and costs (Markelova et al., 2009, Devaux et al., 2009, Barham and Chitemi, 2009). However, as has been shown throughout this study, such conceptualisation of collective action is narrow and problematic as it fails to recognise the multiple layers of expectations and outcomes. And because smallholder collective action is not particularly motivated only by economic incentives, expectations and outcomes also strives to achieve social recognitions. Collective action institutions also evolve to “socially fit” – its functionality may result in access to or exclusion from resources and does not always guarantee equal participation (Cleaver, 2012, Cleaver, 2002). The sceptism at which non catholic look at the collective action

initiative underscore the religious acceptance and imperatives for such collective action.

It has been argued that development approaches that draw on participation may fail to transform the way things are done within the community due to the underlying socially embedded institutions that are informed by values, beliefs and practices that have to do with the mode of social relations (Platteau and Abraham, 2002, p. 19). This suggests that these socially embedded principles that shape collective action and other community practices have historical and cultural roots that have endured over time and cannot be uprooted quickly by an external form that have consistently proved ineffective. Therefore, if formal institutional smallholder collective is to achieve its intended purpose and objective, it needs to embrace and accept the socio-cultural and deep-rooted aspect of the community life that has and will continue to shape community life. This therefore means an acceptance of the need to contextualize the design of smallholder collective action projects.

In addition, smallholder collective action projects should also accept the flexibility needed to survive in local community and accept the community way of organizing rooted in complex and intricate way of life are always going to interfere. Adoption of flexible approach is best suited to prepare facilitators of such collective action project to adapt to unforeseen changes that crop up from cultural practices because a society‘s formal institutions must resonate with its shared habits and widely understood practices if they are to promote stability and development.

8.6 Thesis Contribution

Literature on collective action has grown since the thesis by Olson Mancur, which focused on rationalising the action of individuals in collective action (Olson, 1965). Theories on collective action have grown since then cutting across different academic and scholarly disciplines ranging from economics, to social movement and to political organising. It has also stretched to community development, international development and participation as well as to agriculture and development. Different scholars from different schools of thoughts have attempted to provide measured

insight on how collective action work amount different people. Some have interpreted it from the economic angle while others attempted to blend in the non-economic aspect.

With specific focus on smallholder collective action, most of the literature that followed the 2008 World Development Report Bank(World Bank, 2007), attempted to interpret smallholder collective action from a formal institutional design viewpoint and often equate smallholder collective action to produce organisation and farmers union (Penrose-Buckley, 2007b) and ignored the informal form of smallholder collective action that are based on and rooted in informal social bonding and practices. Accordingly, this thesis sought to contribute to knowledge in the following ways:

First, the findings will provoke more debates that is expected to provide nuanced understanding of smallholder collective action in rural communities but highlight the complex and intricate admixture of interactions and relationships that shape smallholder collective action. Smallholder collective action remains a recognised way of ensuring cooperation between smallholders in different communities. Therefore, exploring the complexities of smallholder collective action beyond the one offered by the mainstream institutionalism offered a deeper understanding and reflection on why smallholder collective action has continued to pose challenge to external facilitators of collective action projects and why there have been sustainability concerns of such project. This is due to its external imposition nature that is not reflective of local norms and practices but based on externally driven idea of controlling individual actors in the system.

The study offers policy maker an opportunity to rethink the practice of smallholder collective action as part of broader poverty reduction agenda. The mix of both descriptive and critical analysis in this study provided the platform for understanding the theoretical and empirical opportunity for the advancement of smallholder collective action and the need to harmonise the various perspectives for a more nuanced approach.

The study raises concern on the possible generalisation of these project outcomes and argued for context specific approach to smallholder collective action. By highlighting the need to focus on the context and actors rather than the system, the study enriches the data and debate on smallholder collective action in a way that could lead to new research investigations on the challenges and not on telling successful stories.

Fourth, this thesis underscores the importance of understanding historical practices as a way of understanding important current and contemporary approaches. The study in essence tasks researchers to look beyond the formal system in order to ensure an understanding of the informal system; it encourages researchers to embrace informality as a way of life and not as an anomaly in the life of a community. Therefore, this study attempted to fill the gaps of the mainstream institutionalism while contributing to the general debate on collective action through the everyday life of Ugbawka smallholder farmers in Enugu State, Nigeria.

8.7 Implications for Future Research

This study revealed that smallholder collective action is more complex than the mainstream institutional view appears to suggest and that it requires an understanding of the context as well as the acceptance of the role of social and political factor in shape the outcome of smallholder collective action. On motivation, the study found out that economic and noneconomic incentives are important motivational factors in smallholder collective action. While capital and prospect of improved economic return could motivate a farmer to participate in smallholder collective action, noneconomic incentives like community practice and trust could influence the decision of a farmer to either participate or not.

The researcher also found out that smallholder farmer accepts both formal and informal form of smallholder collective action albeit at different levels. Everyday life of smallholders in Ugbawka are shaped consciously and unconsciously by diverse institutional arrangements which could be formal or informal and their interactions with

these institutions could be purposive or impulsive. Therefore, it is not easy to always predict and/or condition smallholder farmers to act in a certain manner based on institutional and formal system requirements. Therefore, interactions with institutions are not predetermined nor controlled. Smallholder farmers are at liberty to select which institution they like to interact with at any given time depending on their interest and in some cases livelihood needs (Berry, 1989). People based on their subjective values had the agency to decide on which institutions to use to shape their everyday interactions (Osei-Kufuor, 2010).

The reality in the communities is that institutions interact with each other. Formal and informal institutions cross paths to shape outcome at the local level. These interactions are sometimes intended but also unintended or as a result of policy outcome, which could be to resolve existing institutional conflict or advance policy prescriptions that concern both sides of the institutional divide. Therefore, it is important that smallholder collective action place more emphasis on understanding of informal system, socio-cultural and political factors as well as the formal sectors that puts emphasis on economic rationality based on design rule. Further research could then attempt to examine the possibility of building linkage between informal and formal form of smallholder collective action. It could require institutions that promote the effective nesting that could bridge the gap between formal and informal institutions. Institutional form involving both formal and informal governance mechanism are the norm because they make possible to accommodate the interest of both strong and weak powers as well as capture the rubrics of both traditional and modern systems (Stone, 2011, p. 33). Informal governance is as legitimate as formal governance and should not be viewed as disorder and abnormality to the functioning of the system.

Understanding this crosscutting nature of formal and informal forms of governance in collective action is important for policy makers and institutions like the World Bank and Oxfam in designing future collective action projects for smallholder farmers. People attach importance to the formal system but also recognize the role of the informal traditional society in shaping their life. Designing a framework that supports

access to formal institutions as well as informal traditional could bridge the wide gap between formal smallholder collective action and the social embedded informal smallholder collective action that depend largely on social values and cultures to survive. Social actors as well do not necessarily subscribe to formal institutions or informal institutions; they rely on both to mediate their mundane interactions. This supports the argument of the critical intuitionalism on the importance of understanding context and underlying principles and social effects of institutions and not merely their visible forms(Cleaver, 2002). An understanding of the context, the content as well as the roles of the various institutions at play, helps in shaping our understanding of the functioning of collective action within a particular society. There is no one right institutional fix but rather an acceptance of the mix that matters and makes governance right (Rhodes, 1997). Therefore, designing collective action projects that incorporate individual subjective values and social context into the process of institutionalising smallholder collective action will result in greater understanding of the complexity and heterogeneity of the local context. In particular, designing smallholder collective action projects should consider history of existing social relationship, the ongoing struggles and contestations over power and resources within the locality and among diverse individuals. The diverse institutional channels that shape agency for different people, then, the dynamics of the social context will become explicit (Osei-Kufuor, 2010, p. 343). Consequently, smallholder collective action at the community level should be able to absorb both formal and informal ingredients of collective action and ensure that smallholder farmers are able to benefit and engage widely with governance and NGOs as well as manage collective action better within a hybridized system of collective action

Appendixes:

Appendix 1: Research Respondents -Smallholder Farmers

S/N	Name	Gender	Age	Marital Status
1	Ani Emmanuel	Male	40	Married
2	Rita Nwoye	Female	45	Married
3	Donatus Ogbu	Male	60	Married
4	Emmanuel Okekechukwu	Male	38	Single
5	Bertrand Onyema Ogbonna	Male	45	Married
6	James Okoye Okoh	Male	50	Married
7	Christian Chukwu Onovo	Male	52	Married
8	Chief Alex Edeh	Male	53	Married
9	Mrs Veronica Edeh	Female	41	Married
10	Obiageli Edeh	Female	39	Married
11	Ani Bridget	Female	42	Married
12	Mrs Joshua Edeh	Female	48	Married
13	Emmanuel Edeh Mbanou	Male	61	Married
14	Chinelo Nwodo	Female	50	Married
15	Oyibo C Okoye	Male	42	Married
16	Alor Sarah Chinweolu	Female	28	Single
17	Sunday Innocent Edeh	Male	63	Married
18	Emmanuel Nwankwo	Male	45	Married
19	Ikechukwu Nnamani	Male	61	Married
20	Stephen Egbo	Male	57	Married
21	Ifeanyi Anene	Male	28	Single
22	David Chukwu	Male	60	Married
23	Ogbonna Chukwuebuka	Male	29	Single
24	Nkemdilim Ugbuaja	Male	48	Married
25	Mrs Chinyere Nnamani	Female	45	Married
26	Chief Innocent Ani	Male	55	Married
27	Rosaline Edeh	Female	48	Widowed
28	Mrs Angela Obiekwe	Female	53	Married
29	Christian Onah	Male	53	Married
30	Anthony Emengini	Male	39	Married
31	Emmanuel Eze Ozoekwem	Male	50	Married
32	Ifeyinwa Chukwu	Female	55	Married
33	Mama Angela	Female	40	Married
34	Azuka Okonkwo	Female	45	Married
35	Nkiru Agu	Female	42	Widowed
36	Ogbonye Madu	Female	47	Married

Appendix 2: Elders, Migrant Labourers, Traders and Milling Center Supervisors

Elders		
S/N	**Name**	**Age**
1	Okonkwo Ogbu	84
2	Pa Anene Okafor	82
3	Ndukwe Ominyi	87
Migrant Labourers		
1	Titus Made	32
2	John Okafor	40
3	Okwe Nkwa	42
4	Tochi Mbamalu	34
5	Ikenna Uzo	37
6	Sunday Oriaka	39
Rice Traders from the City		
1	Eunice Uzo	N/A
2	John Madu	N/A
3	Solomon Jideaku	N/A
4	Rosaline Amako	N/A
5	Rita Ogbu	N/A
6	Emeka Okeke	N/A
Milling Centre Supervisor		
1	Oyibo Okoye	42
2	Uzo Amaechi	46

Appendix 3: Government Institutions, NGOs, Development Projects and Others

S/N	Name	Organisation	Designation
1	Martin Ilo	Enugu State Government	Secretary to the State Government
2	Dr Eric Olaedo	Enugu State Government	Commissioner for Agriculture Enugu State Government
3	Fr Mike Chukwuma	Catholic Parish Ugbawka	Parish Priest
4	Pastor Nobert	Anglican Pastor	Pastor in Charge
5	Egba T	CADP	Project Manager
6	Nonso Ozubu	ADP	Project Manager
7	Okafor Madubuko	SONGHAI Enugu	Project Manager
8	Ogom Anagwu	Oxfam Novib Nigeria	Project Support Officer

9	Constance Okeke	ActionAid Nigeria	Food Right Advisor

Appendix 4: Rice farming in Ugbawka by Okonkwo Ogbu – 84 years

In the 1940s through Ben Edeh who was then working as a civil servant during the war. After the war, he brought seeds of rice back and cultivated in the village. After that particular year, some of his brothers also joined him in rice farming. In the later part of 1940s, other Ugbawka farmers joined in the rice farming and in 1954, my family got involved in rice farming. My mother became one of the foremost women rice farmers in Ugbawka. Rice was still seen as a luxury food then and was cooked only during festive periods and mostly on Sundays and Christmas. The poor can hardly afford rice then and it is used to celebrate big ceremonies. There was no milling centre. Processing was by the use of mortar and pestle and harvesting was done using locally designed sickle by blacksmith.

That was during the regime of Baluonwu as the Chief Agric officer for the old Eastern Region. Zonal Agriculture officer in charge of Nkanu zone then attracted the Chief Agriculture officer for supervision. It was proposed that a rice mill was be to established in Ugbawka under private-public partnership. He proposed a partnership whereby Ugbawka community will contribute certain percentage of money and the government to contribute the rest. The partnership evolved and the first rice mill came in Ugbawka came in around 1957/56. It was during the time of Egwundu the Agriculture officer for Nkanu Zone. Extension workers and trainers were also brought to manage this mill and to train farmers on methods of cultivation. It was also a huge government presence in rice farming. The mill was shared with other neighbouring communities that also started rice farming after Ugbawka had started.

This spurred interest and attention and many farmers saw rice farming as profitable farming but also another crop. Investment into rice farming was increasing incrementally leading to private owned mills in Ugbawka. The ministry of Agriculture was fully supporting the development of rice farming in Ugbawka then and was also involved in marketing and distribution during the early periods. The motivation behind the entry of many farmers into rice farming was purely because of its cash orientation. It was in hot demand in cities and people can come from different cities in search of rice.

The development continued with introduction of fertilizer application system. Extension workers were still working actively and training of farmers was ongoing on regular basis. Rice farming then became widely spread across many families in Ugbawka until around 1986/7 when the entire Ugbawka was hit by fungal and pest attack. This brought rice farming in Ugbawka to its' kneel and many farmers lost their entire rice farm. It made people poor and turned many farmers away from rice farming. However gradually farmers began to crawl their way back into rice farmers and a few farmers have actually specialised in rice farming while maintaining little attention to other crops.

References

ABDU, M. S. & MARSHALL, R. 1990. Agriculture and development policy: A critical review of Nigerian experience in the period up to 1985. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 6**,** 311-23.

ABDULWAHID, S. 2006. Gender Differences in Mobilization for Collective Action: Case Studies of Villages in Northern Nigeria. *CAPRi Working Paper No. 58: International Research Workshop on 'Gender and Collective Action.* Washington, DC: IFPRI.

ABRAHAM, A. & PLATTEAU, J. P. 2004. Participatory Development: Where Culture Creeps In. *In:* RAO, V. (ed.) *Culture and Public Action.* Stanford: Calif. Stanford Univ. Press.

ACATI, E. G. 1983. Expert Consultation on Women in Food Production. Rome, Italy, : FAO.

ACHARYA, A. 2012. Foundations of Collective Action in Asia: Theory and Practice of Regional Cooperation. Tokyo, Japan: Asian Development Bank Institute

ACHEBE, C. 1958. *Things Fall Apart,* London, Penguin Books Limited.

AFIGBO, A. E. 1982. *The age of innocence, the Igbo and their neighbours in pre-colonial times,* Owerri, Nigeria, Imo State: Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports.

AGBO, F. 2009. Farmers' Perception Of Cooperative Societies In Enugu State, Nigeria. *Agro-Science Journal of Tropical Agriculture, Food, Environment and Extension,* 8**,** 169-74.

AGBO, F. & CHIDEBELU, S. 2010. *Socio-Economic Determinants of Cooperative Societies' Access to the Services of the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank,* Nsukka, Nigeria, University of Nigeria.

AGBONLAHOR, M. U., ENILOLOBO, O. S., SODIAYA, C. I., AKERELE, O. & OKE, J. T. 2012. Accelerating Rural Growth Through Collective Action: Groups' Activities and Determinants of Participation in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences,* 27**,** 114-36.

AGRAWAL, A. 2001. Common Property Institutions and Sustainable Governance of Resources. *World Development,* 29**,** 1649-72.

AGRAWAL, A. 2005. *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects,* Durham, Duke University Press.

AHMED, S. 2010. PrOpCom Guideline on Monitoring, Impact Assessment and Reporting. Abuja: DFID.

AKANDE, T. 2001. An Overview of the Nigerian Rice Economy" A Project Report, the Nigerian Rice Economy in a Competitive World: Constraints, Opportunities and Strategic Choices. Cotonou: WARDA.

AKHTER, S. 2002. Reviewed Work: Women in Igbo Life and Thought by Joseph Therese Agbasiere. *Cambridge Anthropology,* 23**,** 84-6.

AKPOKODJE, G., LANÇON, F. & ERENSTEIN, O. 2001. *Nigeria's Rice Economy: State of the Art,* Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, WARDA.

AKPOKODJE, G., LANÇON, F. & ERENSTEIN, O. 2003a. *Nigeria's Rice Policy and Development: A Review* Abidjan, WARDA.

AKPOKODJE, G., LANÇON, F. & ERENSTEIN, O. 2003b. Nigeria's Rice Policy and Development: A Review Abidjan: WARDA.

AMADIUME, I. 1987. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society,* London, Zed Books.

ANAND, P. B. 2003. From conflict to co-operation: some design issues for local collective action institutions in cities. *Journal of International Development,* 15**,** 231-43.

ANAND, P. B. 2007. Capability, Sustainability, and Collective Action: An Examination of a River Water Dispute. *Journal of Human Development,* 8**,** 109-32.
ANAND, S. & SISAY, G. 2011. *Engaging Smallholders in Value Chains: Creating new opportunities for beekeepers in Ethiopia,* Oxford, Oxfam.
ARCE, A. 2003. Value contestations in development interventions: Community development and sustainable livelihoods approaches. *Community Development Journal,* 38**,** 199-212.
ARCE, A. & LONG, N. 2000. Reconfiguring Modernity and Development from an Anthropological Perspective. *In:* ARCE, A. & LONG, N. (eds.) *Anthropology, development, and modernities : exploring discourses, counter-tendencies, and violence.* London: Routledge.
ARCE, A. & LONG, N. 2003. *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourse, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, Taylor & Francis.
ATKINSON, P. 2001. *Handbook of Ethnography,* London, SAGE.
AWOTIDE, B. A., AWOYEMI, T. T. & FASHOGBON, A. 2015. Factors Influencing Smallholder Farmers' Participation in Cooperative Organization in Rural Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 6**,** 87-97.
BADEN, S. 2013a. Women's collective action in African agricultural markets: the limits of current development practice for rural women's empowerment. *Gender & Development,* 21**,** 295-311.
BADEN, S. 2013b. *Women's Collective Action: Unlocking the potential of agricultural markets,* Oxford, Oxfam.
BADEN, S. & HARVEY, C. 2011. Small Farmers, Big Change: Lessons from Oxfam‟s Agricultural Programmes. Oxford: Oxfam GB.
BAHORA, M., STERK, C. E. & ELIFSON, K. W. 2009. Understanding recreational ecstasy use in the United States: A qualitative inquiry. *International Journal of Drug Policy,* 20**,** 62-9.
BALAND, J.-M. & PLATTEAU, J.-P. 2001. Collective Action on the Commons: The Role of Inequality. Belgium: CRED, University of Namur.
BALAND, J.-M. & PLATTEAU, J. P. 1996. *Halting degradation of natural resources : is there a role for rural communities?,* Rome, Italy, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
BANDIERA, O., BARANKAY, I. & RASUL, I. 2005a. Cooperation in collective action. *Economics of Transition,* 13**,** 473-98.
BANDIERA, O., BARANKAY, I. & RASUL, I. 2005b. Social Preferences and the Response to Incentives: Evidence from Personnel Data. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 120**,** 917-62.
BARHAM, J. & CHITEMI, C. 2009. Collective action initiatives to improve marketing performance: Lessons from farmer groups in Tanzania. *Food Policy,* 34**,** 53-9.
BARKIN, J. S. 2010. *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory,* New York, Cambridge University Press.
BARNES, B. 2000. *Understanding agency : social theory and responsible action,* London, Sage.
BASCOM, W. R. 1952. The Esusu: A Credit Institution of the Yoruba. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 82**,** 63-9.
BATTEN, T. R. 1949. *Problems of African Development,* Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press.

BAUMANN, P. & SINHA, S. 2001. Linking Development with Democratic Processes in India: Political Capital and Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis. London: Overseas Development Institute.
BEBBINGTON, A., DHARMAWAN, L., FAHMI, E. & GUGGENHEIM, S. 2004. Village politics, culture and community-driven development: insights from Indonesia. *Progress in Development Studies,* 4**,** 187-205.
BEN-YAMI, M. 2000. Integration of traditional institutions and people's participation in an artisanal fisheries development project in southeastern Nigeria. Kiryat , Israel: FAO.
BENJAMIN, C. E. 2008. Legal Pluralism and Decentralization: Natural Resource Management in Mali. *World Development,* 36**,** 2255-76.
BENJAMINSEN, T. A. & LUND, C. 2002. Formalisation and Informalisation of Land and Water Rights in Africa: An Introduction. *The European Journal of Development Research,* 14**,** 1-10.
BERGOLD, J. & THOMAS, S. 2012. Participatory Research Methods: A Methodological Approach in Motion. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 13**,** 1-30.
BERNARD, H. R. & RYAN, G. W. 2010. *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches,* Los Angeles, SAGE.
BERRY, S. 1989. Social Institutions and Access to Resources. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 59**,** 41-55.
BESLEY, T. & COATE, S. 2003. Centralized versus decentralized provision of local public goods: a political economy approach. *Journal of Public Economics,* 87**,** 2611-37.
BHANDARI, P. B. 2013. Rural livelihood change? Household capital, community resources and livelihood transition. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 32**,** 126-36.
BIGGS, S. 1997. Livelihood, coping and influencing strategies of rural development personnel. *Project Appraisal,* 12**,** 101-6.
BIGGS, S. & MATSAERT, H. 2004. *Strengthening Poverty Reduction Programmes Using an Actor-oriented Approach: Examples from Natural Resources Innovation Systems,* London, Agricultural Research & Extension Network.
BINGEN, J., SERRANO, A. & HOWARD, J. 2003. Linking farmers to markets: different approaches to human capital development. *Food Policy,* 28**,** 405-19.
BIRNER, R. & RESNICK, D. 2010. The Political Economy of Policies for Smallholder Agriculture. *World Development,* 38**,** 1442-52.
BOELENS, R. A. 2008. *The Rules of the Game and The Game of the Rules: Normalization and Resistance in Andean Water Control* PhD, Wageningen University, The Netherlands.
BORRAS JR, S. M. 2008. La Vía Campesina and its Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform. *Journal of Agrarian Change,* 8**,** 258-89.
BOURDIEU, P. & WACQUANT, L. J. D. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology,* Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.
BOURKE, B. 2014. Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process. *The Qualitative Report,* 19**,** 1-9.
BRAUTIGAM, D. 1997. Substituting for the state: Institutions and industrial development in eastern Nigeria. *World Development,* 25**,** 1063-80.
BROMWICH, D. & SAUNDERS, M. 2012. Establishing cooperatives for effective community development in rural China. *Development in Practice,* 22**,** 1097-108.
BRUNS, B. & BRUN, P. C. Collective Action and Property Rights for Sustainable Development: Strengthening Collective Action. *In:* MEINZEN-DICK , R. S. & DI

GREGORIO, M., eds. Collective Action and Property Rights for Sustainable Development: 2020 Vision Focus 2004 Washington D.C. The International Food Policy Research Institute
BRYMAN, A. 2012. *Social Research Methods,* Oxford, OUP Oxford.
BUCHANAN, K. M. & PUGH, J. C. 1995. *Land and people in Nigeria: The Human Geography of Nigeria and Its Environmental Background,* London, University of London Press.
BURNS, T. R. & STÖHR, C. 2011. Power, knowledge, and conflict in the shaping of commons governance. The case of EU Baltic fisheries. *Journal of the Commons,* 5**,** 233-58.
CAMPBELL, R. & SOWDEN, L. 1985. *Paradoxes of Rationality and Cooperation: Prisoner's Dilemma and Newcomb's Problem*, University of British Columbia Press.
CARWILE, C. 2007. *Sweet Mothers: Feminine Forms of Power in Nigeria*, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
CBN 2005. Annual Report and Statement of Account. Abuja: Central Bank of Nigeria.
CHABAL, P. 2009a. *Africa : The Politics of Suffering and Smiling,* Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
CHABAL, P. 2009b. *Africa : the politics of suffering and smiling,* London; Pietermaritzburg, Zed ; University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
CHALFIN, B. 2004. *Shea Butter Republic: State Power, Global Markets, and the Making of an Indigenous Commodity,* London, Taylor & Francis.
CHAMBERS, R. 2003. *Whose reality counts? : putting the first last,* London, ITDG Publ.
CHAMBERS, R. 2014. *Rural Development: Putting the Last First,* London, Taylor & Francis.
CHAMBERS, R., PACEY, A. & THRUPP, L. A. (eds.) 1989. *Farmer First: Farmer Innovation and Agricultural Research,* London: : IT Publications.
CHIDEBELU, A. S. 1986. Diffusion of Cooperative Mode of Farming among. Small Holder Farmers of Nigeria. *In:* OKEREKE, O. (ed.) *Co-operatives and the Nigerian Economy.* Nsukka: Nigeria: University of Nigeria Press.
CHUBB, L. T. 1961. *Ibo land Tenure,* Ibadan Ibadan University Press.
CHUKU, G. 2005. *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, Routledge.
CHUKWU, D. O. 2014. Inter-Group Relations in Africa: The Amurri-Ugbawka Groups, to 1983. *2014,* 5**,** 2039-46.
CLARK, G. 1994. *Onions are my husband : survival and accumulation by West African market women,* Chicago u.a., Univ. of Chicago Press.
CLEAVER, F. 2001. Institutional Bricolage, Conflict and Cooperation in Usangu, Tanzania. *IDS Bulletin,* 32**,** 26-35.
CLEAVER, F. 2002. Reinventing Institutions: Bricolage and the Social Embeddedness of Natural Resource Management. *The European Journal of Development Research,* 14**,** 11-30.
CLEAVER, F. 2007. Understanding Agency in Collective Action. *Journal of Human Development,* 8**,** 223-44.
CLEAVER, F. 2012. *Development Through Bricolage: Rethinking Institutions for Natural Resource Management,* London, Routledge.
CLEAVER, F. & DE KONING, J. 2015. Furthering Critical Institutionalism. *International Journal of the Commons,* 9**,** 1-8.

CLEAVER, F., FRANKS, T., BOESTEN, J. & KIIRE, A. 2005. Water Governance and Poverty: What Works for the Poor? *In:* BRADFORD, U. O. (ed.) *Water Governance and Poverty.* Bradford
CLOUGH, P. 1985. The Social Relations of Grain Marketing in Northern Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy***,** 16-34.
COFFEY, A. 1999. *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity,* London, SAGE Publications.
COLLIER, P. & DERCON, S. 2009. African Agriculture in 50 Years: Smallholders in a Rapidly Changing World; Expert Meeting on How to Feed the World in 2050. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.
COOKE, B. & KOTHARI, U. 2001. *Participation: the New Tyranny?*, Zed Books.
COOPER, R. & BURRELL, G. 1988. Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: An Introduction. *Organization Studies,* 9**,** 91-112.
CORNWALL, A. 2004. Introduction: New Democratic Spaces? The Politics and Dynamics of Institutionalised Participation. *IDS Bulletin,* 35**,** 1-10.
CORNWALL, A. 2007. Spaces for Transformation? Reflections on issues of Power and Difference in Participation and Development. *In:* HICKEY, S. & MOHAN, G. (eds.) *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation: Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development.* London Zed Books.
COULTER, J., GOODLAND, A., TALLONTIRE, A. & STRINGFELLOW, R. 1999. Marrying Farmer Cooperation and Contract Farming for Service Provision in a Liberalising Sub-Saharan Africa. *Natural Resource perspectives.* London: The Overseas Development Institute.
CRESWELL, J. W. 2014. *Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches,* Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications.
CROZIER, M. & FRIEDBERG, E. 1977. *L'acteur et le Système,* Paris, Seuil.
DARAMOLA, A. S., EHUI, S., UKEJE, E. & MCINTIRE, J. 2008. Agricultural Export Potential in Nigeria. *In:* COLLIER, P., SOLUDO, C. C. & PATTILLO, C. A. (eds.) *Economic policy options for a prosperous Nigeria.* Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
DASGUPTA, P. 1989. Trust as a Commodity. *In:* GAMBETTA, D. (ed.) *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations.* London: B. Blackwell.
DAVIN, D. 1996. Gender and Rural-Urban Migration in China. *Gender and Development,* 4**,** 24-30.
DAWES, R. M. 1973. The commons dilemma game: An n-person mixed-motive game with a dominating strategy. *Oregon Research Institute Research Bulletin,* 13**,** 1-12.
DE VILLARD, S., DEY DE PRYCK, J., TARAN, P., ESTRUCH, E. & PERCIC, M. 2010. Making Migration Work for Women and Men in Rural Labour Markets: Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief 6. *In:* DE VILLARD, S. (ed.) *Gender Rural Employment: Pathways Out of Poverty* Geneva: ILO, FAO & IFAD.
DENSCOMBE, M. 2007. *The good research guide : for small-scale social research projects,* Maidenhead, Open University Press.
DESMARAIS, A. A. 2002. PEASANTS SPEAK - The Vía Campesina: Consolidating an International Peasant and Farm Movement. *The Journal of Peasant Studies,* 29**,** 91-124.
DESMARAIS, A. A. 2007. *La Vía Campesina : globalization and the power of peasants,* Halifax, Fernwood.

DESMARAIS, A. A. 2008. The power of peasants: Reflections on the meanings of La Vía Campesina. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 24**,** 138-49.
DEVAUX, A., HORTON, D., VELASCO, C., THIELE, G., LÓPEZ, G., BERNET, T., REINOSO, I. & ORDINOLA, M. 2009. Collective action for market chain innovation in the Andes. *Food Policy,* 34**,** 31-8.
DFID & PROPCOM 2009. Making Tractor Markets Work for the Poor in Nigeria: A PrOpCom Case Study. Maitama-Abuja.: DFID.
DFID & PROPCOM 2011. Nigeria PrOpCom Project Completion Report. Abuja: DFID PROPCOM.
DFID & SDC 2008. The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) Approach. London & Bern: DFID & SDC.
DIA, A. & TRAORE, A. 2011. Effective Cooperation: A new role for cotton producer co-ops in Mali. *Programme Insights.* Oxford: Oxfam GB.
DIKE, A. A. 1983. Land Tenure System in Igboland. *Anthropos,* 78**,** 853-71.
DIONYSIOU, I., FRINCKE, D., BAKKEN, D. E. & HAUSER, C. 2005. Actor-Oriented Trust. *In:* UNIVERSITY, W. S. (ed.). Washington D.C: Washington State University.
EASTERN REGION OF NIGERIA 1954. Annual Report of the Co-operative Department for the Years 1951-53. Enugu: Eastern Region Government of Nigeria.
EISNER, E. W. 1991. *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice,* New York, N.Y., Toronto : Macmillan Pub. Co.
EKELEME, F., KAMARA, A. Y., OMOIGUI, L. O., TEGBARU, A., MSHELIA, J. & ONYIBE, J. E. 2008. Guide to Rice Production in Borno State, Nigeria. Ibadan, Nigeria: IITA.
EKPERE, J. A. 1980. Rural cooperatives and dairy development: A Nigerian case. *National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) Journal,* 2**,** 43-7.
EKWE-EKWE, H. 2006. *Biafra Revisited,* California, African Renaissance.
ELLIS, F. 2000a. *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries,* Oxford Oxford Univ. Press.
ELLIS, F. 2000b. *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.
ELLIS, F. & MDOE, N. 2003. Livelihoods and Rural Poverty Reduction in Tanzania. *World Development,* 31**,** 1367-84.
ELSON, D. 1999. Labor Markets as Gendered Institutions: Equality, Efficiency and Empowerment Issues. *World Development,* 27**,** 611-27.
EMODI, A. I. & MADUKWE, M. C. 2008. A Review of Policies, Acts and Initiatives in Rice Innovation System in Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension,* 12**,** 76-83.
EYBEN, R., HARRIS, C. & PETTIT, J. 2006. Introduction: Exploring Power for Change. *IDS Bulletin,* 37**,** 1-10.
EZEDINMA, C. 2005. Impact of Trade on Domestic Rice Production and the challenge of Self Sufficiency in Nigeria. Ibadan: IITA.
EZIKE, J. O. 1998. Delineation of Old and New Enugu State. Enugu: Ministry of Works, Land and Survey.
FALOLA, T. & PADDOCK, A. 2011. *The Women's War of 1929: A History of Anti-colonial Resistance in Eastern Nigeria*, Carolina Academic Press.
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA 2009. Budget 2009. *In:* FINANCE, F. M. O. (ed.). Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA 2010. Budget 2010: Appropriation Bill for Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation for 2010. *In:* FINANCE, M. O. (ed.). Abuja Federal Government of Nigeria.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1970. Second National Development Plan 1970-74; Programme for Post-War Reconstruction and Development. *In:* INFORMATION, F. M. O. (ed.). Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1975. Third National Development Plan 1975-1980,. Lagos: The Central Planning Office Federal Ministry of Economic Development.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1976. First progress report on the Third National Development Plan 1975-80. Lagos: Central Planning Office, Federal Ministry of Economic Development.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1981. Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85. Lagos: Federal Republic of Nigeria.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY 2007. 7 Point Policy Agenda. *In:* O.O.T (ed.) *The Presidency* Abuja Federal Republic of Nigeria.
FELDMAN, M. S., BELL, J. & BERGER, M. T. 2004. *Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers*, AltaMira Press.
FISCHER, E. & QAIM, M. 2014. Smallholder Farmers and Collective Action: What Determines the Intensity of Participation? *Journal of Agricultural Economics,* 65**,** 683-702.
FOX-WOLFGRAMM, S. J. 1997. Towards developing a methodology for doing qualitative research: The dynamic-comparative case study method. *Scandinavian Journal of Management,* 13**,** 439-55.
FRANKS, T. & CLEAVER, F. 2007. Water governance and poverty: a framework for analysis. *Progress in Development Studies,* 7**,** 291-306.
FRIEDBERG, E. 1993. *Le pouvoir et la règle: Dynamiques de l'action organisée,* Paris, Seuil.
GAMBETTA, D. 1989. Can We Trust? *In:* GAMBETTA, D. (ed.) *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations.* London: B. Blackwell.
GARFINKEL, H. 1984. *Studies in ethnomethodology,* Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.
GAVENTA, J. 2006. Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis. *IDS Bulletin,* 37**,** 23-33.
GAVIN, S.-B. 2013. Researching Women's Collective Action: End of Project Evaluation Report. Oxford: Oxfam GB.
GAYATHRI, J. 2011. Growing Partnerships: Private sector working with farmers in Sri Lanka. *Working Paper Series Small Farmers, Big Change: Achieving Scale in the Development of Smallholder Agriculture.* Oxford: Oxfam GB.
GEERTZ, C. 1973. *The Interpretations of Culture:Selected Essays,* New York, NY, BasicBooks.
GIDDENS, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration,* Cambridge, Polity.
GLASER, B. G. 1978. *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory,* Mill Valley, Calif., Sociology Press.
GLOVER, D. J. 1987. Increasing the benefits to smallholders from contract farming: Problems for farmers' organizations and policy makers. *World Development,* 15**,** 441-8.
GOODBURN, C. 2014. Rural–Urban Migration and Gender Disparities in Child Healthcare in China and India. *Development and Change,* 45**,** 631-55.

GREEN, M. 2006. Confronting Categorical Assumptions About the Power of Religion in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy,* 33**,** 635-50.
GREEN, M. M. 1941. *Land Tenure in an Ibo village in South-Eastern Nigeria,* London, London Percy Lund, Humphries $ Co.
GREENER, I. 2002. Agency, social theory and social policy. *Critical Social Policy,* 22**,** 688-705.
GRINDLE, M. S. 1997. Divergent Cultures? When Public Organizations Perform Well in Developing Countries. *World Development,* 25**,** 481-95.
GYAU, A., FRANZEL, S., CHIATOH, M., NIMINO, G. & OWUSU, K. 2014. Collective action to improve market access for smallholder producers of agroforestry products: key lessons learned with insights from Cameroon's experience. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability,* 6**,** 68-72.
GYAUA, A., TAKOUTSINGB, B., DEGRANDE, A. & FRANZEL, S. 2012. Producers' Motivation for Collective Action for Kola Production and Marketing in Cameroon. *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics,* 113**,** 43-50.
HALL, S. 1990. Cultural Identity and Diaspora. *In:* RUTHERFORD, J. (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* London, England: Lawrence & Wishart.
HANCOCK, W. K. 1942. *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs,* London, Oxford University Press.
HARDIN, G. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science,* 162**,** 1243-8.
HARDIN, R. 2001. Trust in Society:. Conceptions and Explanations of Trust. *In:* COOK, K. (ed.) *Trust in Society.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
HARRISS, J. 2002. The Case for Cross-Disciplinary Approaches in International Development. *World Development,* 30**,** 487-96.
HAYNES, J. 2007. *Religion and development: conflict or cooperation?*, Palgrave Macmillan.
HEIKKILA, T., SCHLAGER, E. & DAVIS, M. W. 2011. The Role of Cross-Scale Institutional Linkages in Common Pool Resource Management: Assessing Interstate River Compacts*. *Policy Studies Journal,* 39**,** 121-45.
HEILMAN, B. E. & KAISER, P. J. 2002. Religion, identity and politics in Tanzania. *Third World Quarterly,* 23**,** 691-709.
HELLEINER, G. K. 1996. *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria,* Homewood, Ill, R.D. Irwin.
HELLIN, J., LUNDY, M. & MEIJER, M. 2009. Farmer organization, collective action and market access in Meso-America. *Food Policy,* 34**,** 16-22.
HICKEY, S. & MOHAN, G. 2005. Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development. *Development and Change,* 36**,** 237-62.
HINDERINK, J. & STERKENBURG, J. J. 1983. Agricultural Policy and Production in Africa: The Aims, the Methods, and the Means. *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* 21**,** 1-23.
HOGGETT, P. 2001. Agency, Rationality and Social Policy. *Journal of Social Policy,* 30**,** 37-56.
HOLTZMAN, J., MARTIN, J. & ABBOTT, R. 1988. Operational Guidelines for Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Marketing Systems. Washington. D.C Abt Associates Inc.
HUDSON, J. 2009. Talking up Social Capital: An Analysis of Social Voice. *Working Paper-6/09.* Bath, UK: Department of Economics, University of Bath, Bath, U. K.

HUTH, W. P. 1969. *Traditional institutions and land tenure as related to agricultural development among the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria,* Madison, Wisconsin Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin.
IDACHABA, F. S. 1985. Priorities for Nigerian Agriculture in the Fifih National Development Plan, 1986-90. *In:* UNIT, F. A. C. (ed.) *Coordinating, F. A.* Ibadan, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Natural Resources.
IFE, K. 2010. Enugu State Integrated Organic farming Programme- the Songhai-Enugu Initiative. Lagos, Nigeria: Value Fronteira Ltd.
IFE, K. 2013. Agribusiness Public-Private Partnerships – A Country Report of Nigeria. Country Case Studies–Africa *In:* SANTACOLOMA, P., GÁLVEZ-NOGALES, E., MHLANGA, N., RANKIN, M. & RÖTTGER, A. (eds.) *Agribusiness Public-Private Partnerships.* Rome: FAO.
IFEDIORA, O. 2014. An Analysis of Igbo Traditional Land Tenure System in Amawbia (Amobia), Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State'. *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention,* 3**,** 24-38.
IFEMESIA, C. C. 1979. *Traditional Humane Living Among the Igbo: An Historical Perspective*, Fourth Dimension Publishers.
IGBOKWE, J. 1995. *Igbos, twenty five years after Biafra,* Lagos, Advent Communications.
IJERE, M. O. 1974. Colonial Policy in Nigerian Agriculture and Its Implementation. *Agricultural History,* 48**,** 298-304.
IJERE, M. O. 1992. *Prospects of Nigerian Cooperatives,* Enugu, Nigeria, ACENA.
ISAACMAN, A. 1990. Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa. *African Studies Review,* 33**,** 1-120.
IWUAGWU, O. 2012. Food Shortages, Survival Strategies and the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria during the Nigeria Civil War. *The Journal of International Social Research,* 5**,** 280-9.
JACKSON, C. 1997. Sustainable development at the sharp end. *Development in Practice,* 7**,** 237-47.
JEFFREYS, M. D. W. 1956. The degeneration of the ofo Anam. *Nigerian field.,* 21**,** 173-7.
JOCHNICK, C. 2012. Systems, Power, and Agency in Market-Based Approaches to Poverty. *Oxfam America Research Backgrounder Series* Boston, MA: Oxfam America.
JOHNSON, C. 2004. Uncommon Ground: The 'Poverty of History' in Common Property Discourse. *Development and Change,* 35**,** 407-34.
JONES, E., SMITH, S. & WILLS, C. 2012. Women producers and the benefits of collective forms of enterprise. *Gender & Development,* 20**,** 13-32.
JONES, G. I. 1949. Ibo Land Tenure. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 19**,** 309-23.
KENALEMANG, L. M. 2013. *Things Fall Apart: An Analysis of Pre and Post-Colonial Igbo Society,* Karlstad, Sweden, Karlstad University.
KHAPOYA, V. B. 2010. *The African Experience : An Introduction,* New York & London, Longman & Pearson Education distributor.
KING, S., SINTES, H. & ALEMU, M. 2012. Beyond participation: making enterprise development really work for women. *Gender & Development,* 20**,** 129-44.
KIRK-GREENE, A. H. M. 1971. *Crisis and conflict in Nigeria : a documentary sourcebook, 1966-1970,* Aldershot, Gregg Revivals.

KIRSTEN, J. F. & VAN ZYL, J. 1998. Defining Small-Scale Farmers In The South African Context. *Agrekon,* 37**,** 560-71.
KOPPEN, B. V., GIORDANO, M., BUTTERWORTH, J. & MAPEDZA, E. 2007. Community-based Water Law and Water Resource Management Reform in Developing Countries: Rationale, Contents and Key Messages. Montpellier: CGIAR
KRIEGER, S. 1985. Beyond "subjectivity": The use of the self in social science. *Qualitative Sociology,* 8**,** 309-24.
KRUIJSSEN, F., KEIZER, M. & GIULIANI, A. 2009. Collective action for small-scale producers of agricultural biodiversity products. *Food Policy,* 34**,** 46-52.
LADEBO, O. J. 1999. Determinants of Adoption of New Technology among Rice Farmers in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria Sapon, Ogun: University of Agriculture, Sapon Nigeria.
LAGEMANN, J. 1977. *Traditional African farming systems in Eastern Nigeria : an analysis of reaction to increasing population pressure,* München, Weltforum Verlag.
LANGLEY, P. 1988. *Discovering Sociology,* Ormskirk,, Causeway.
LASSWELL, H. D. 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How,* Michigan, University of Michigan.
LAWAL, M. K. The Spatial Pattern of Commercial Banks in Sokoto State. Workshop on the Sokoto Region, Sokoto, November 1985, 1985 Sokoto Sokoto.
LEACH, M., MEARNS, R. & SCOONES, I. 1999. Environmental Entitlements: Dynamics and Institutions in Community-Based Natural Resource Management. *World Development,* 27**,** 225-47.
LEMARCHAND, R. 1988. The State, the Parallel Economy and the Changing Structure of Patronage System. *In:* ROTHCHILD, D. S. & CHAZAN, N. H. (eds.) *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa.* New York: Westview Press.
LINCOLN, Y. S. & GUBA, E. G. 1985., . *Naturalistic Inquiry,* Newbury Park, Calif, Sage Publications.
LONG, N. 1989. *Encounters at the interface : a perspective on social discontinuities in rural development,* Wageningen, Netherlands, Agricultural University.
LONG, N. 1990. From Paradigm Lost to Paradigm Regained? The Case for an Actor-oriented Sociology of Development. *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies***,** 3-24.
LONG, N. 2003. An Actor-Oriented Approach to Development Intervention. *In:* CRUZ, D. A. (ed.) *Rural life improvement in Asia.* Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization.
LONG, N. 2004. *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives,* London, Taylor & Francis.
LONG, N. & LONG, A. 1992. *Battlefields of knowledge : the interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development,* London u.a., Routledge.
LUND, C. 2006. Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa. *Development and Change,* 37**,** 685-705.
LUND, C. 2010. Recategorizing 'Public' and 'Private' Property in Ghana. *In:* LUND, C. & SIKOR, T. (eds.) *TThe Politics of Possession: Property, Authority and Access to Natural Resources.* Malden, MA Wiley-Blackwell.
LYON, F. 2000. Trust, Networks and Norms: The Creation of Social Capital in Agricultural Economies in Ghana. *World Development,* 28**,** 663-81.
LYON, F. & PORTER, G. 2009. Market institutions, trust and norms: exploring moral economies in Nigerian food systems. *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 33**,** 903-20.

MALA, W. A., TIEGUHONG, J. C., NDOYE, O., GROUWELS, S. & BETTI, J. L. 2012. Collective action and promotion of forest based associations on non-wood forest products in Cameroon. *Development in Practice,* 22**,** 1122-34.
MANYONG, V. M., IKPI, A., OLAYEMI, J. K., YUSUF, S. A., OMONONA, B. T., OKORUWA, V. & IDACHABA, F. S. 2005. Agriculture in Nigeria: Identifying opportunities for increased commercialization and investment, Research Report Funded by USAID. Ibadan: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).
MARKELOVA, H., MEINZEN-DICK, R., HELLIN, J. & DOHRN, S. 2009. Collective action for smallholder market access. *Food Policy,* 34**,** 1-7.
MARKELOVA, H. & MWANGI, E. 2010. Collective Action for Smallholder Market Access: Evidence and Implications for Africa. *Review of Policy Research,* 27**,** 621-40.
MARTIN, S. M. 1988. *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800-1980,* Cambridge Cambridge University Press.
MASON, J. 2002. *Qualitative Researching,* London, SAGE.
MATERA, M., BASTIAN, M. L. & KENT, S. K. 2013. *The Women's War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria*, Palgrave Macmillan.
MAXWELL, J. A. 2005. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach,* Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London, Sage Publications.
MAY, T. 1998. Reflexivity in the age of reconstructive social science. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 1**,** 7-24.
MAY, T. 2011. *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Research,* Berkshire, McGraw-Hill Education.
MBAH, S. 1997. *A History of Ugbawka from Pre-colonial Times to the Present,* Enugu, Nigeria, Reynolds Publishers.
MCCARTHY, N., DUTILLY-DIANÉ, C. & DRABO, B. 2004. Cooperation, collective action and natural resources management in Burkina Faso. *Agricultural Systems,* 82**,** 233-55.
MCLEOD, J. & THOMSON, R. 2009. *Researching Social Change: Qualitative Approaches,* London, SAGE.
MEAGHER, K. 2010. *Identity Economics: Social Networks & the Informal Economy in Nigeria,* Woodbridge Suffolk, James Currey.
MEHTA, L., LEACH, M. & SCOONES, I. 2001. Editorial: Environmental Governance in an Uncertain World. *IDS Bulletin,* 32**,** 1-9.
MEINZEN-DICK , R. S. & DI GREGORIO, M. (eds.) 2004. *Collective Action and Property Rights for Sustainable Development,* Washington D.C: International Food Policy Research Institute.
MIKHAIL, M., HICKSON, C. & WILLOUGHBY, R. 2013. Donor in the Dark: Putting a spotlight on UK aid to small-scale farmers. Oxford: Oxfam GB, Concern Worldwide - UK & Self Help Africa.
MINGIONE, E. 1994. Life Strategies and Social Economies in the Postfordist Age. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 18**,** 24-45.
MINH, L. N. & MAERTEN, B. 2012. Growing a Better Future in Viet Nam: Expanding Rights, Voices and Choices for Small-scale Farmers. Oxford: Oxfam GB.
MISIKO, M. 2010. Indigenous Seed Institutions in Fragile Communities: Report of Second Africa Rice Congress, Bamako, Mali, 22–26 March 2010: Innovation and Partnerships to Realize Africa's Rice Potential. Cotonou, Benin.: Africa Rice Centre.

MÖLLERING, G. 2005. The Trust/Control Duality: An Integrative Perspective on Positive Expectations of Others. *International Sociology,* 20**,** 283-305.
MOLLINGA, P. P. 2001. Water and politics: levels, rational choice and South Indian canal irrigation. *Futures,* 33**,** 733-52.
MOODY, K. 1997. *Workers in a lean world : unions in the international economy,* London, Verso.
MOORE, D. S. 1999. The Crucible of Cultural Politics: Reworking "Development" in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands. *American Ethnologist,* 26**,** 654-89.
MOORE, M. 1994. How difficult is it to construct market relations? A commentary on Platteau. *The Journal of Development Studies,* 30**,** 818-30.
MOSER, C. O. N. 1989. Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs. *World Development,* 17**,** 1799-825.
MOSSE, D. & SIVAN, M. 2005. *The rule of water : statecraft, ecology and collective action in south India,* Delhi; Oxford, Oxford University Press.
MURRUGARRA, E., LARRISON, J., SASIN, M. J. & WORLD BANK. 2010. *Migration and Poverty: Towards Better Migration Opportunities for the Poor,* Washington, D.C., World Bank.
MUSTAPHA, A. R. & MEAGHER, K. 2000. Agrarian Production, Public Policy and the state in Kano Region, 1900-2000 *Drylands Research.* Crewkerne, Somerset, United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DFID).
NAGEL, J. 1981. Politics and the organization of collective action: The case of Nigeria, 1960–1975. *Political Behavior,* 3**,** 87-116.
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2006. Annual Abstract of Statistics 2006. *In:* STATISTICS, N. B. O. (ed.). Abuja: Federal Republic of Nigeria.
NAVARRO, Z. 2006. In Search of a Cultural Interpretation of Power: The Contribution of Pierre Bourdieu. *IDS Bulletin,* 37**,** 11-22.
NAYAK, A. & KEHILY, M. J. 2008. *Gender, Youth and Culture: Young Masculinities and Femininities,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
NEMES, G. 2005. Integrated Rural Development: The Concept and Its Operation. Budapest: Institute of Economics Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest.
NEUMAN, W. L. 2006. *Social research methods : qualitative and quantitative approaches,* Boston, Mass., Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
NIGHTINGALE, D. J. & CROMBY, J. 1999. *Social constructionist psychology : a critical analysis of theory and practice,* Philadelphia, Open University Press.
NJAKA, E. N. 1974. *Igbo political culture,* Evanston, Northwestern University Press.
NORTH, D. C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
NUIJTEN, M. 1992a. Local Organisation as Organising Practices. *In:* LONG, N. & LONG, A. (eds.) *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development.* London: Routledge.
NUIJTEN, N. 1992b. Local Organisation as Organising Practices. *In:* LONG, N. & LONG, A. (eds.) *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development*
London Routledge.
NWACHUKWU, S. C. 2015. *Social Capital, Empowerment and Development Needs in South Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study of Cooperatives in Owerri, Nigeria.* PhD, University of Canterbury.

NWAUBANI, E. 1994. Chieftaincy among the Igbo: A Guest on the Center-Stage. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 27**,** 347-71.
NYAMU-MUSEMBI, C. 2005. An Actor-oriented Approach to Rights in Development. *IDS Bulletin,* 36**,** 41-51.
O'NEILL, O. 2002. *A Question of Trust: ,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
OFUOKU, A. U. & URANG, E. 2012. Effect of Cohesion on Loan Repayment in Farmers' Cooperative Societies in Delta State, Nigeria. *Agricultural Practice and Science Journal,* 83**,** 131-9.
OFUOKU, A. U., UZOKWE, U. N. & IDEH, V. 2009. Comparative analysis of cooperative and non-cooperative fish farmers in the central agro-ecological zone of Delta State Nigeria. *Extension Farming Systems Journal,* 2**,** 97-104.
ỌGBALỤ, F. C. 1979. *Igbo Institutions and Customs,* Onitsha, Nigeria, University Publishing Company.
OJOWU, O. & MENSAH, S. N. A. 1988. Agricultural commodity marketing in Nigeria without the Marketing Boards. *Agricultural Administration and Extension,* 29**,** 281-92.
OKEREAFOEZEKE, N. 2003. Traditional social control in an ethnic society: Law enforcement in a Nigerian community 1. *Police Practice and Research,* 4**,** 21-33.
OKODO, I. 2012. The Igbo Age Grade System and African Traditional Religion. *Internet Afrrev: An International Online Multi-disciplinary Journal,* 1**,** 70-8.
OKORO, D. & UJAH, O. C. 2009. Agricultural Policy and Budget Analysis in Nigeria (1999-2007):Perspectives and Implications for SLISSFAN Project States. Report Submitted to Oxfam GB Nigeria. Enugu: Socioeconomic Rights Initiative & African Institute for Applied Economics.
OKRY, F., VAN MELE, P., NUIJTEN, E. & STRUIK, P. C. 2010. The Rice Seed Sector in Guinea: are we missing out crucial Stakeholders?; Report of Second Africa Rice Congress, Bamako, Mali, 22–26 March 2010: Innovation and Partnerships to Realize Africa's Rice Potential. Cotonou, Benin: Africa Rice Centre.
OLIVIER DE SARDAN, J.-P. 2005. *Anthropology and Development: Understanding Contemporary Social Change,* London, Zed.
OLSEN, W. 2005. Dialectical Triangulation and Empirical Research. *In:* CARTER, B. & NEW, C. (eds.) *Making Realism Work: Realist Social Theory and Empirical Research.* London: Taylor & Francis.
OLSON, M. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action* Boston, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
OLSON, M. 2009. *The Logic of Collective Action,* Cambridge, MI, Harvard University Press.
OMOTOSO, F. 2013. *Governance Crisis and Democracy in Nigeria, 1999 - 2012*.
ONYEIWU, S. 1997. Altruism and economic development: The case of the igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria. *The Journal of Socio-Economics,* 26**,** 407-20.
OSEI-KUFUOR, P. 2010. *Does Institutionalising Decentralisation Work? Rethinking Agency, Institutions And Authority In Local Governance.* PhD, University of Bradford.
OSTROM, E. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
OSTROM, E. 2005. *Understanding Institutional Diversity,* Princeton, N.J. ; Woodstock, Princeton University Press.
OSTROM, E., GARDNER, R. & WALKER, J. 1994. *Rules, Games, and Common-Pool Resources,* Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

OSTROM, E., JANSSEN, M. A. & ANDERIES, J. M. 2007. A Diagnostic Approach for Going Beyond Panaceas. *PNAS,* 104
OXFAM 2013. Researching Women Collective Action Oxford: Oxfam.
PENROSE-BUCKLEY, C. 2007a. *Producer organisations : a guide to developing collective rural enterprises,* London, Oxfam GB.
PENROSE-BUCKLEY, C. 2007b. *Producer Organisations: A Guide to Developing Collective Rural Enterprises,* London, Oxfam GB.
PEREZ, V. 2005. *Les Paysans Sont De Retour Essai,* Arles, France, Actes Sud.
PERÒ, D. 2014. Class Politics and Migrants: Collective Action among New Migrant Workers in Britain. *Sociology*.
PLATTEAU, J. P. & ABRAHAM, A. 2002. Participatory Development in the Presence of Endogenous Community Imperfections. *The Journal of Development Studies,* 39**,** 104-36.
PORTER, G. 1993. Changing Accessibility and the Reorganization of Rural Marketing in Nigeria. *Journal of Macromarketing,* 13**,** 54-63.
PORTER, G., HARRIS, F., LYON, F., DUNG, J. & ADEPETU, A. A. 2003. Markets, ethnicity and environment in a vulnerable landscape: the case of small-scale vegetable production on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria, 1991–2001. *Geographical Journal,* 169**,** 370-81.
PORTER, G., LYON, F., ADAMU, F. & OBAFEMI, L. 2010. Conflict and Cooperation in Market Spaces: Learning from the Operation of Local Networks of Civic Engagement in African Market Trade. *Human Organization,* 69**,** 31-42.
PORTER, G., LYON, F. & POTTS, D. 2007. Market institutions and urban food supply in West and Southern Africa: a review. *Progress in Development Studies,* 7**,** 115-34.
POTEETE, A. R. & OSTROM, E. 2004. In pursuit of comparable concepts and data about collective action. *Agricultural Systems,* 82**,** 215-32.
RAHMAN, H. M. T., HICKEY, G. M. & SARKER, S. K. 2015. Examining the Role of Social Capital in Community Collective Action for Sustainable Wetland Fisheries in Bangladesh. *Wetlands,* 35**,** 487-99.
RAPPORT, N. & OVERING, J. 2000. *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts,* London, Routledge.
RASMUSSEN, L. N. & MEINZEN-DICK, R. 1995. Local Organizations for Natural Resource Management: Lessons from Theoretical and Empirical Literature. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute
RATNER, B. D., MEINZEN-DICK, R., MAY, C. & HAGLUND, E. 2013. Resource Conflict, Collective Action, and Resilience: An Analytical Framework. . *International Journal of the Commons,* 7**,** 1.
REARDON, T. & VOSTI, S. A. 1995. Links Between Rural Poverty and the Environment in Developing Countries: Asset Categories and Investment Poverty. *World Development,* 23**,** 1495-506.
RENO, W. 2002. The Politics of Insurgency in Collapsing States. *Development and Change,* 33**,** 837-58.
RENO, W. 2008. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
REYNOLDS, R. R. 2001. Reviewed Work: Women in Igbo Life and Thought by Joseph Thérèse Agbasiere. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines,* 35**,** 575-7.

RHODES, R. A. W. 1997. *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity, and Accountability,* Buckingham, Open University Press.
ROBBINS, P. 2010. *Political Ecology : A Critical Introduction,* Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell.
ROBERTS, B. 1994. Informal Economy and Family Strategies. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 18**,** 6-23.
ROBSON, C. 2002. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers,* Oxford, Blackwell.
ROCHELEAU, D. 2001. Complex Communities and Relational Webs Uncertainty, Surprise and Transformation in Machakos. *IDS Bulletin,* 32**,** 78-87.
RODNEY, W. 1981. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* Washington, D.C. , Howard University Press.
RONDOT, P. & COLLION, M.-H. Agricultural producer organizations : their contribution to rural capacity building and poverty reduction. Working Paper, 2001 Washington D.C. World Bank.
RUSSELL, L. 2005. It's a question of trust: balancing the relationship between students and teachers in ethnographic fieldwork. *Qualitative Research,* 5**,** 181-99.
RUSTIN, M. 2002. The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative Issues and Examples. *In:* CHAMBERLAYNE, P., BORNAT, J. & WENGRAF, T. (eds.) *Reflections on the Biographical Turn in Social Science.* London: Taylor & Francis.
SCHAFFER, B. 1986. Access: A Theory of Corruption and Bureaucracy. *Public Administration and Development,* 6**,** 357-76.
SCOONES, I. & THOMPSON, J. 2000. Beyond Farmer First - Rural People's Knowledge, Agricultural Research and Extension Practice: Towards a Theoretical Framework. *Rural People's Knowledge, Agricultural Research and Extension Practice,* 1**,** 1-20.
SEIBEL, H. D. 2007. Microfinance in Nigeria: Origins, options and opportunities. Cologne: Cologne University, Germany.
SEN, A. 2001. *Development as Freedom,* Oxford, Oxford.
SEN, A. 2004. How Does Culture Matter. *In:* RAO, V. & WALTON, M. (eds.) *Culture and Public Action.* Stanford: Calif. Stanford Univ. Press.
SHIFERAW, B., OBARE, G. & MURICHO, G. 2008. Rural market imperfections and the role of institutions in collective action to improve markets for the poor. *Natural Resources Forum,* 32**,** 25-38.
SHIFERAW, B., OBARE, G., MURICHO, G. & SILIM, S. 2009. Leveraging institutions for collective action to improve markets for smallholder producers in less-favored areas. *Afjare* 3**,** 1-18.
SIKOR, T. & LUND, C. 2009. Access and Property: A Question of Power and Authority. *Development and Change,* 40**,** 1-22.
SIVRAMKRISHNA, S. & JYOTISHI, A. 2008. Monopsonistic exploitation in contract farming: articulating a strategy for grower cooperation. *Journal of International Development,* 20**,** 280-96.
SOKARI-GEORGE, E. 1987. Planning in Nigeria: The Agricultural Base 1962—1985. *GeoJournal,* 14**,** 97-108.
STANBIC IBTC BANK 2012. Business Innovation Facility: Smallholder Farmer Finance Scheme, Nigeria. Lagos: Stanbic IBTC Bank.
STONE, R. W. 2011. *Controlling Institutions: International Organizations and the Global Economy,* Cambridge Cambridge University Press.

SUMNER, A. & TRIBE, M. The Nature of Epistemology and Methodology in Development Studies: What Do We Mean By Rigour? DSA Annual Conference, 'Bridging Research and Policy, 2004 London. Development Studies Association
TAYLOR, J. 2011. The intimate insider: negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative Research,* 11**,** 3-22.
THORP, R., STEWART, F. & HEYER, A. 2005. When and how far is group formation a route out of chronic poverty? *World Development,* 33**,** 907-20.
THULARE, P. 2004. Trading democracy? Johannesburg informal traders and citizenship. *Policy: issues and actors,* 17**,** 1-19.
TONER, A. L. 2008a. *Who Shapes Development? : An Ethnography of Participation in Collective Village life in Uchira, Tanzania.* PhD, University of Bradford.
TONER, A. L. 2008b. *Who Shapes Development?: An Ethnography of Participation in Collective Village Life in Uchira, Tanzania.* PhD, University of Bradford.
TOSTENSEN, A., TVEDTEN, I. & VAA, M. 2001. *Associational Life in African Cities: Popular Responses to the Urban Crisis*, Stylus Pub Llc.
TRIA KERKVLIET, B. J. 2009. Everyday politics in peasant societies (and ours). *The Journal of Peasant Studies,* 36**,** 227-43.
UCHENDU, V. C. 1965. *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria,* New York, Rinehart & Winston.
UKIWO, U. 2003. Politics, Ethno-Religious conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* 41**,** 115-38.
UNEP 2005. Integrated Assessment of the Impact of Trade Liberalization: A Country Study on the Nigerian Rice Sector. Geneva: UNEP.
VAN DER PLOG, J. D. 2008. *The New Peasantries: Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalisation,* London, Earthscan.
WADE, R. 1998. *Village Republics: Economic Conditions for Collective Action in South India, Robert Wade Cambridge University Press, 1988, 250 pp,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
WALKENHORST, P. 2007. Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Nigeria. *Distortions Working Paper 37.* Washington, DC: World Bank.
WATTS, M. 1983. *Silent Violence : Food, Famine, And Peasantry In Northern Nigeria,* Berkeley, University of California Press.
WATTS, M. & LUBECK, P. 1983. The Popular Classes and The Oil Boom: A Political Economy of Rural and Urban Poverty. *In:* ZARTMAN, I. W. (ed.) *The Political economy of Nigeria.* New York: Praeger.
WEBSTER, N. & ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, L. 2002. *In the Name of the Poor Contesting Political Space for Poverty Reduction,* London, Zed Books.
WIDNER, J. 1991. Interest Group Structure and Organization in Kenya's Informal Sector: Cultural Despair or a Politics of Multiple Allegiances? *Comparative Political Studies,* 24**,** 31-55.
WILLIAMS, G. 1985. Marketing without and with marketing boards: the origins of state marketing boards in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy,* 12**,** 4-15.
WILLIAMS, G. 2004. Evaluating participatory development: tyranny, power and (re)politicisation. *Third World Quarterly,* 25**,** 557-78.
WILLS, J. 2008. Making Class Politics Possible: Organizing Contract Cleaners in London. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 32**,** 305-23.

WILSON, D., WILSON, K. & HARVEY, C. 2011a. *Small farmers, big change : scaling up impact in smallholder agriculture,* Rugby, Practical Action Pub/Oxfam.
WILSON, D., WILSON, K. & HARVEY, C. 2011b. *Small Farmers, Big Change: Scaling Up Impact in Smallholder Agriculture,* Oxford, Practical Action Pub.
WOLF, E. R. 1990. Distinguished Lecture: Facing Power—Old Insights, New Questions. *American Anthropologist,* 92**,** 586-96.
WONG, S. 2009. Institutionalizing Water Governance in England and Wales: Potential and Limitations. *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research,* 1**,** 307-20.
WORLD BANK 1989. Nigeria Strategy for Agricultural Growth. Washington, DC: World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2000. Implementation Completion and Results Report: National FADAMA Development Project: Report No. 19730. Washington, DC World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2002. From Action to Impact: The Africa Region's Rural Strategy. Washington, DC: The World Bank, Rural Development Operations, the Africa Region.
WORLD BANK 2004. Making Services Work for Poor People: World Development Report 2004. Washington D.C: World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2007. World Development Report 2008: Agricutural and Development. Washington DC: World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2008. Third National FADAMA Development Project (FADAMA III): Project Information Document (PID). Washington, D.C: The World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2010a. Implementation Completion and Results Report: Second National FADAMA Development Project: Report No: ICR00001160. Washington D.C: World Bank.
WORLD BANK 2010b. Third National FADAMA Development Project (FADAMA III) (P096572). Washington, DC: World Bank.
WORSLEY, P. 1997. *Knowledges: What Different People Make of the World,* London, Profile Books.
XU, Y. 2012. Moral Resources, Political Capital and the Development of Social Work in China: A Case Study of City J in Shandong Province. *British Journal of Social Work*.
XU, Y. Q. & YAO, Y. 2015. Informal Institutions, Collective Action, and Public Investment in Rural China. *American Political Science Review,* 109**,** 371-91.
YIN, R. K. 2003. *Case study research : design and methods,* Los Angeles, Calif., Sage Publications.
YUVAL-DAVIS, N. 2006. Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice,* 40**,** 197-214.
YUVAL-DAVIS, N. 2011. *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations,* London, SAGE Publications.